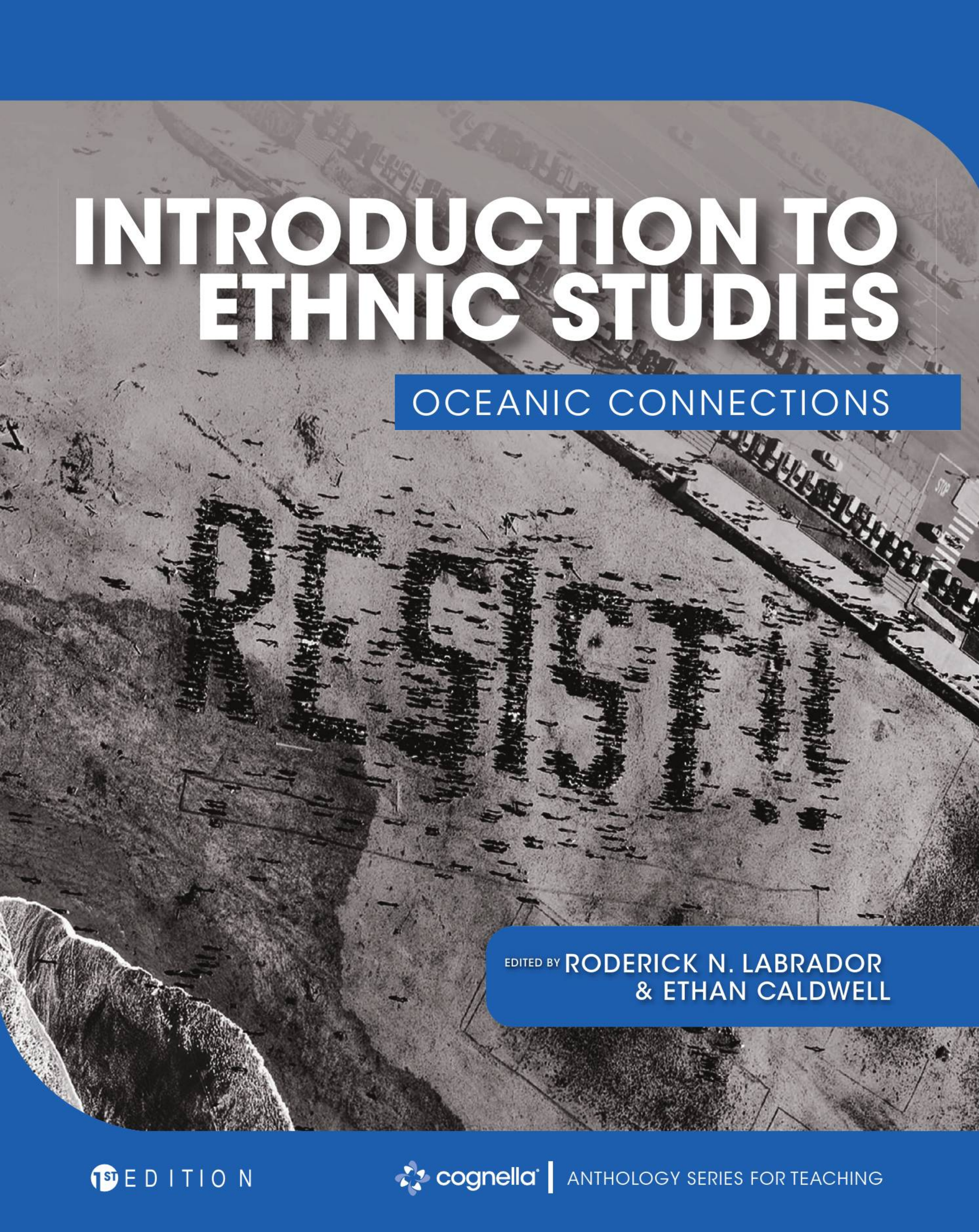




INTRODUCTION TO ETHNIC STUDIES

OCEANIC CONNECTIONS

EDITED BY **RODERICK N. LABRADOR
& ETHAN CALDWELL**

 **1ST** EDITION



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ANTHOLOGY SERIES FOR TEACHING

INTRODUCTION TO ETHNIC STUDIES

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OCEANIC CONNECTIONS

FIRST EDITION

Edited by
Roderick N. Labrador and Ethan Caldwell

University of Hawaii – Manoa



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INTRODUCTION

Ethnic studies began as an academic field of study and practice in the late 1960s in the continental United States. Since its inception, ethnic studies as analytical framework and pedagogy has been exported and applied in different geographical locations and political economic contexts. While taking stock of foundational concepts in ethnic studies, this introductory book is designed to (re)imagine what the field can look like from an oceanic framework. In that regard, this introductory book examines United States and Hawai'i history and contemporary social issues from multiple perspectives to arrive at a plural and multicultural understanding of the United States and Oceania.

This book underscores ethnic studies' role in academia to promote social justice through research, teaching, and community engagement by tackling issues from the perspective of marginalized groups. By centering those on the margins, we highlight how the groups we study have acted collectively to change systems, structures, and relations of power, challenging readers to see marginalized people not as simply as victims of oppression but as active agents of history. This book is designed to provide students from various disciplines with a glimpse of the ways ethnic studies gives us tools for multicultural respect and understanding as well as encourage us to imagine and build a better world.

The first section, "Key Concepts," introduces students to core concepts used in the study of race and ethnic relations in the United States. These relations are explored through the lens of two major processes that have marked the formation of US society—colonization and migration. We introduce these concepts to allow students to understand why social inequalities in the US persist and how these inequalities are distributed across racial, ethnic, and gender groups. At the same time, we look at these groups' numerous struggles for a just, peaceful, and equal society.

The second section of the book, "Colonization, Occupation, Sovereignty," emphasizes the experiences of indigenous people, particularly those of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific peoples and Asian Americans. Our emphasis on Hawai'i and the Pacific maintains our Oceanic focus and underlies our understanding and analyses of the dynamics that produce inequalities among different social groups. This focus is also

intended to be used as a way to begin envisioning a new future for ethnic studies, while discussing key themes in the field, such as race, ethnicity, culture, indigeneity, migration, political economy, climate change, sustainability, pedagogy, gender, sexuality, colonization, de-colonization, and community building. The readings in this section address the political, cultural, and ecological problems facing a globalized Hawai'i and Pacific, while staking new claims for community alliances and academic interventions. This section examines how an ethnic studies approach can help us examine indigenous communities and knowledge practices, while also exploring the ways that indigenous lands, waters, seas, identities, and political movements connect to ethnic studies.

The final section of the book, "Migration and De-Colonization," considers the possibilities of an Oceanic ethnic studies. Our use of "oceanic" has two primary meanings: (1) it refers to the series of islands and oceans that make up roughly half of the Earth's surface and is often configured as the geopolitical region of Hawai'i and the Pacific and (2) the ocean as both practice and metaphor for fluidity, flow, movement, mobility, nonlinearity, and connectivity. This section opens up numerous questions: What are the possibilities of Oceanic ethnic studies? What does it mean to teach and learn from an Oceanic ethnic studies framework? Where are the spaces and places we can teach and learn Ocean ethnic studies? How can Oceanic ethnic studies inform our own personal grounding and community work and affect how we teach and learn? How can island- and ocean-based epistemologies and pedagogies inform our research, analysis, and action? This section considers trans/oceanic connections within the context of ethnic studies, hoping to inspire new theories, methodologies, pedagogies, and practices. How can Oceanic ethnic studies help us rethink structures, relations, institutions, and systems of power while maintaining our commitments to social justice and community praxis?

This book is by no means definitive or comprehensive. We hope you take this introductory text as a starting point for further conversations about how we might reframe the vision of ethnic studies from the perspective of oceans and Oceania. We encourage you to look for historical, linguistic, cultural, and political connections and intersections to discover what lies on and beyond the horizon of an Oceanic ethnic studies.

PART I

KEY CONCEPTS

Questions

- What is “race”? Has race always been the same? What does it mean to say that race is a social construct?
- What is the difference between “racism” and “prejudice”? Take two examples that Tatum uses to explain how racism works. Discuss them and identify the institutions involved.
- What steps can be taken to address racism? Apply these steps to a current event or an incident in your own life.
- According to Okamura, why do certain ethnic groups engage in identity construction? What elements do such groups draw on to construct a collective identity?
- Discuss the ways in which enslaved African Americans exercised their agency. Discuss Lipsitz’s concept of “possessive investment in whiteness.”
- Discuss contemporary examples of the “possessive investment in whiteness” and African American agency and resistance.
- How do you define “class,” and what factors in your life have shaped your class position? How are your privileges related to your class position? How can you be an ally of someone who does not have that privilege?

Defining Racism

"Can we talk?"

Beverly Daniel Tatum

Early in my teaching career, a White student I knew asked me what I would be teaching the following semester. I mentioned that I would be teaching a course on racism. She replied, with some surprise in her voice, "Oh, is there still racism?" I assured her that indeed there was and suggested that she sign up for my course. Fifteen years later, after exhaustive media coverage of events such as the Rodney King beating, the Charles Stuart and Susan Smith cases, the O. J. Simpson trial, the appeal to racial prejudices in electoral politics, and the bitter debates about affirmative action and welfare reform, it seems hard to imagine that anyone would still be unaware of the reality of racism in our society. But in fact, in almost every audience I address, there is someone who will suggest that racism is a thing of the past. There is always someone who hasn't noticed the stereotypical images of people of color in the media, who hasn't observed the housing discrimination in their community, who hasn't read the newspaper articles about documented racial bias in lending practices among well-known banks, who isn't aware of the racial tracking pattern at the local school, who hasn't seen the reports of rising incidents of racially motivated hate crimes in America—in short, someone who hasn't been paying attention to issues of race. But if you are paying attention, the legacy of racism is not hard to see, and we are all affected by it.

The impact of racism begins early. Even in our preschool years, we are exposed to misinformation about people different from ourselves. Many of us grew up in neighborhoods where we had limited opportunities to interact with people different from our own families. When I ask my college students, "How many of you grew up in neighborhoods where most of the people were from the same racial group as

Beverly Daniel Tatum, "Defining Racism," *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race*, pp. 3-17, 243-245. Copyright © 1997 by Perseus Books Group. Reprinted with permission.

your own?” almost every hand goes up. There is still a great deal of social segregation in our communities. Consequently, most of the early information we receive about “others”—people racially, religiously, or socioeconomically different from ourselves—does not come as the result of firsthand experience. The secondhand information we do receive has often been distorted, shaped by cultural stereotypes, and left incomplete.

Some examples will highlight this process. Several years ago one of my students conducted a research project investigating preschoolers’ conceptions of Native Americans.¹ Using children at a local day care center as her participants, she asked these three- and four-year-olds to draw a picture of a Native American. Most children were stumped by her request. They didn’t know what a Native American was. But when she rephrased the question and asked them to draw a picture of an Indian, they readily complied. Almost every picture included one central feature: feathers. In fact, many of them also included a weapon—a knife or tomahawk—and depicted the person in violent or aggressive terms. Though this group of children, almost all of whom were White, did not live near a large Native American population and probably had had little if any personal interaction with American Indians, they all had internalized an image of what Indians were like. How did they know? Cartoon images, in particular the Disney movie *Peter Pan*, were cited by the children as their number-one source of information. At the age of three, these children already had a set of stereotypes in place. Though I would not describe three-year-olds as prejudiced, the stereotypes to which they have been exposed become the foundation for the adult prejudices so many of us have.

Sometimes the assumptions we make about others come not from what we have been told or what we have seen on television or in books, but rather from what we have *not* been told. The distortion of historical information about people of color leads young people (and older people, too) to make assumptions that may go unchallenged for a long time. Consider this conversation between two White students following a discussion about the cultural transmission of racism:

“Yeah, I just found out that Cleopatra was actually a Black woman.”

“What?”

The first student went on to explain her newly learned information. The second student exclaimed in disbelief, “That can’t be true. Cleopatra was beautiful!”

What had this young woman learned about who in our society is considered beautiful and who is not? Had she conjured up images of Elizabeth Taylor when she thought of Cleopatra? The new information her classmate had shared and her own deeply ingrained assumptions about who is beautiful and who is not were too incongruous to allow her to assimilate the information at that moment.

Omitted information can have similar effects. For example, another young woman, preparing to be a high school English teacher, expressed her dismay that she had never learned about any Black authors in any of her English courses. How was she to teach about them to her future students when she hadn’t learned about them herself? A White male student in the class responded to this discussion with frustration in his response journal, writing “It’s not my fault that Blacks don’t write books.” Had one of his elementary, high school, or college teachers ever told him

that there were no Black writers? Probably not. Yet because he had never been exposed to Black authors, he had drawn his own conclusion that there were none.

Stereotypes, omissions, and distortions all contribute to the development of prejudice. *Prejudice* is a preconceived judgment or opinion, usually based on limited information. I assume that we all have prejudices, not because we want them, but simply because we are so continually exposed to misinformation about others. Though I have often heard students or workshop participants describe someone as not having “a prejudiced bone in his body,” I usually suggest that they look again. Prejudice is one of the inescapable consequences of living in a racist society. Cultural racism—the cultural images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of Whites and the assumed inferiority of people of color—is like smog in the air. Sometimes it is so thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out, we are breathing it in. None of us would introduce ourselves as “smog-breathers” (and most of us don’t want to be described as prejudiced), but if we live in a smoggy place, how can we avoid breathing the air? If we live in an environment in which we are bombarded with stereotypical images in the media, are frequently exposed to the ethnic jokes of friends and family members, and are rarely informed of the accomplishments of oppressed groups, we will develop the negative categorizations of those groups that form the basis of prejudice.

People of color as well as Whites develop these categorizations. Even a member of the stereotyped group may internalize the stereotypical categories about his or her own group to some degree. In fact, this process happens so frequently that it has a name, *internalized* oppression. Some of the consequences of believing the distorted messages about one’s own group will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Certainly some people are more prejudiced than others, actively embracing and perpetuating negative and hateful images of those who are different from themselves. When we claim to be free of prejudice, perhaps what we are really saying is that we are not hatemongers. But none of us is completely innocent. Prejudice is an integral part of our socialization, and it is not our fault. Just as the preschoolers my student interviewed are not to blame for the negative messages they internalized, we are not at fault for the stereotypes, distortions, and omissions that shaped our thinking as we grew up.

To say that it is not our fault does not relieve us of responsibility, however. We may not have polluted the air, but we need to take responsibility, along with others, for cleaning it up. Each of us needs to look at our own behavior. Am I perpetuating and reinforcing the negative messages so pervasive in our culture, or am I seeking to challenge them? If I have not been exposed to positive images of marginalized groups, am I seeking them out, expanding my own knowledge base for myself and my children? Am I acknowledging and examining my own prejudices, my own rigid categorizations of others, thereby minimizing the adverse impact they might have on my interactions with those I have categorized? Unless we engage in these and other conscious acts of reflection and reeducation, we easily repeat the process with our children. We teach what

we were taught. The unexamined prejudices of the parents are passed on to the children. It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility to interrupt this cycle.

Racism: A System of Advantage Based on Race

Many people use the terms *prejudice* and *racism* interchangeably. I do not, and I think it is important to make a distinction. In his book *Portraits of White Racism*, David Wellman argues convincingly that limiting our understanding of racism to prejudice does not offer a sufficient explanation for the persistence of racism. He defines racism as a “system of advantage based on race.”² In illustrating this definition, he provides example after example of how Whites defend their racial advantage—access to better schools, housing, jobs—even when they do not embrace overtly prejudicial thinking. Racism cannot be fully explained as an expression of prejudice alone.

This definition of racism is useful because it allows us to see that racism, like other forms of oppression, is not only a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, but a *system* involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals. In the context of the United States, this system clearly operates to the advantage of Whites and to the disadvantage of people of color. Another related definition of racism, commonly used by antiracist educators and consultants, is “prejudice plus power.” Racial prejudice when combined with social power—access to social, cultural, and economic resources and decision-making—leads to the institutionalization of racist policies and practices. While I think this definition also captures the idea that racism is more than individual beliefs and attitudes, I prefer Wellman’s definition because the idea of systematic advantage and disadvantage is critical to an understanding of how racism operates in American society.

In addition, I find that many of my White students and workshop participants do not feel powerful. Defining racism as prejudice plus power has little personal relevance. For some, their response to this definition is the following: “I’m not really prejudiced, and I have no power, so racism has nothing to do with me.” However, most White people, if they are really being honest with themselves, can see that there are advantages to being White in the United States. Despite the current rhetoric about affirmative action and “reverse racism,” every social indicator, from salary to life expectancy, reveals the advantages of being White.³

The systematic advantages of being White are often referred to as White privilege. In a now well-known article, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Peggy McIntosh, a White feminist scholar, identified a long list of societal privileges that she received simply because she was White.⁴ She did not ask for them, and it is important to note that she hadn’t always noticed that she was receiving them. They included major and minor advantages. Of course she enjoyed greater access to jobs and housing. But she also was able to shop in department stores without being followed by suspicious salespeople and could always find appropriate hair care products and makeup in any drugstore. She could send her child to school confident that the teacher

would not discriminate against him on the basis of race. She could also be late for meetings, and talk with her mouth full, fairly confident that these behaviors would not be attributed to the fact that she was White. She could express an opinion in a meeting or in print and not have it labeled the “White” viewpoint. In other words, she was more often than not viewed as an individual, rather than as a member of a racial group.

This article rings true for most White readers, many of whom may have never considered the benefits of being White. It’s one thing to have enough awareness of racism to describe the ways that people of color are disadvantaged by it. But this new understanding of racism is more elusive. In very concrete terms, it means that if a person of color is the victim of housing discrimination, the apartment that would otherwise have been rented to that person of color is still available for a White person. The White tenant is, knowingly or unknowingly, the beneficiary of racism, a system of advantage based on race. The unsuspecting tenant is not to blame for the prior discrimination, but she benefits from it anyway.

For many Whites, this new awareness of the benefits of a racist system elicits considerable pain, often accompanied by feelings of anger and guilt. These uncomfortable emotions can hinder further discussion. We all like to think that we deserve the good things we have received, and that others, too, get what they deserve. Social psychologists call this tendency a “belief in a just world.”⁵ Racism directly contradicts such notions of justice.

Understanding racism as a system of advantage based on race is antithetical to traditional notions of an American meritocracy. For those who have internalized this myth, this definition generates considerable discomfort. It is more comfortable simply to think of racism as a particular form of prejudice. Notions of power or privilege do not have to be addressed when our understanding of racism is constructed in that way.

The discomfort generated when a systemic definition of racism is introduced is usually quite visible in the workshops I lead. Someone in the group is usually quick to point out that this is not the definition you will find in most dictionaries. I reply, “Who wrote the dictionary?” I am not being facetious with this response. Whose interests are served by a “prejudice only” definition of racism? It is important to understand that the system of advantage is perpetuated when we do not acknowledge its existence.

Racism: For Whites Only?

Frequently someone will say, “You keep talking about White people. People of color can be racist, too.” I once asked a White teacher what it would mean to her if a student or parent of color accused her of being racist. She said she would feel as though she had been punched in the stomach or called a “low-life scum.” She is not alone in this feeling. The word *racist* holds a lot of emotional power. For many White people, to be called racist is the ultimate insult. The idea that this term might only be applied to Whites becomes highly problematic for after all, can’t people of color be “low-life scum” too?

Of course, people of any racial group can hold hateful attitudes and behave in racially discriminatory and bigoted ways. We can all cite examples of horrible hate crimes which have been perpetrated by people of color as well as Whites. Hateful behavior is hateful behavior no matter who does it. But when I am asked, “Can people of color be racist?” I reply, “The answer depends on your definition of racism.” If one defines racism as racial prejudice, the answer is yes. People of color can and do have racial prejudices. However, if one defines racism as a system of advantage based on race, the answer is no. People of color are not racist because they do not systematically benefit from racism. And equally important, there is no systematic cultural and institutional support or sanction for the racial bigotry of people of color. In my view, reserving the term *racist* only for behaviors committed by Whites in the context of a White-dominated society is a way of acknowledging the ever-present power differential afforded Whites by the culture and institutions that make up the system of advantage and continue to reinforce notions of White superiority. (Using the same logic, I reserve the word *sexist* for men. Though women can and do have gender-based prejudices, only men systematically benefit from sexism.)

Despite my best efforts to explain my thinking on this point, there are some who will be troubled, perhaps even incensed, by my response. To call the racially motivated acts of a person of color acts of racial bigotry and to describe similar acts committed by Whites as racist will make no sense to some people, including some people of color. To those, I will respectfully say, “We can agree to disagree.” At moments like these, it is not agreement that is essential, but clarity. Even if you don’t like the definition of racism I am using, hopefully you are now clear about what it is. If I also understand how you are using the term, our conversation can continue—despite our disagreement.

Another provocative question I’m often asked is “Are you saying all Whites are racist?” When asked this question, I again remember that White teacher’s response, and I am conscious that perhaps the question I am really being asked is, “Are you saying all Whites are bad people?” The answer to that question is of course not. However, all White people, intentionally or unintentionally, do benefit from racism. A more relevant question is what are White people as individuals doing to interrupt racism? For many White people, the image of a racist is a hood-wearing Klan member or a name-calling Archie Bunker figure. These images represent what might be called *active racism*, blatant, intentional acts of racial bigotry and discrimination. *Passive racism* is more subtle and can be seen in the collusion of laughing when a racist joke is told, of letting exclusionary hiring practices go unchallenged, of accepting as appropriate the omissions of people of color from the curriculum, and of avoiding difficult race-related issues. Because racism is so ingrained in the fabric of American institutions, it is easily self-perpetuating.⁶ All that is required to maintain it is business as usual.

I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt. The person engaged in active racist behavior has identified with the ideology of White supremacy and is moving with it. Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but

the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around, unwilling to go to the same destination as the White supremacists. But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt—unless they are actively antiracist—they will find themselves carried along with the others.

So, not all Whites are actively racist. Many are passively racist. Some, though not enough, are actively antiracist. The relevant question is not whether all Whites are racist, but how we can move more White people from a position of active or passive racism to one of active antiracism? The task of interrupting racism is obviously not the task of Whites alone. But the fact of White privilege means that Whites have greater access to the societal institutions in need of transformation. To whom much is given, much is required.

It is important to acknowledge that while all Whites benefit from racism, they do not all benefit equally. Other factors, such as socioeconomic status, gender, age, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability, also play a role in our access to social influence and power. A White woman on welfare is not privileged to the same extent as a wealthy White heterosexual man. In her case, the systematic disadvantages of sexism and classism intersect with her White privilege, but the privilege is still there. This point was brought home to me in a 1994 study conducted by a Mount Holyoke graduate student, Phyllis Wentworth.⁷ Wentworth interviewed a group of female college students, who were both older than their peers and were the first members of their families to attend college, about the pathways that lead them to college. All of the women interviewed were White, from working-class backgrounds, from families where women were expected to graduate from high school and get married or get a job. Several had experienced abusive relationships and other personal difficulties prior to coming to college. Yet their experiences were punctuated by “good luck” stories of apartments obtained without a deposit, good jobs offered without experience or extensive reference checks, and encouragement provided by willing mentors. While the women acknowledged their good fortune, none of them discussed their Whiteness. They had not considered the possibility that being White had worked in their favor and helped give them the benefit of the doubt at critical junctures. This study clearly showed that even under difficult circumstances, White privilege was still operating.

It is also true that not all people of color are equally targeted by racism. We all have multiple identities that shape our experience. I can describe myself as a light-skinned, well-educated, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian African American woman raised in a middle-class suburb. As an African American woman, I am systematically disadvantaged by race and by gender, but I systematically receive benefits in the other categories, which then mediate my experience of racism and sexism. When one is targeted by multiple isms—racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, anti-Semitism, ageism—in whatever combination, the effect is intensified. The particular combination of racism and classism in many communities of color is life-threatening.

Nonetheless, when I, the middle-class Black mother of two sons, read another story about a Black man's unlucky encounter with a White police officer's deadly force, I am reminded that racism by itself can kill.

The Cost of Racism

Several years ago, a White male student in my psychology of racism course wrote in his journal at the end of the semester that he had learned a lot about racism and now understood in a way he never had before just how advantaged he was. He also commented that he didn't think he would do anything to try to change the situation. After all, the system was working in his favor. Fortunately, his response was not typical. Most of my students leave my course with the desire (and an action plan) to interrupt the cycle of racism. However, this young man's response does raise an important question. Why should Whites who are advantaged by racism *want* to end that system of advantage? What are the *costs* of that system to them?

A *Money* magazine article called "Race and Money" chronicled the many ways the American economy was hindered by institutional racism.⁸ Whether one looks at productivity lowered by racial tensions in the workplace, or real estate equity lost through housing discrimination, or the tax revenue lost in underemployed communities of color, or the high cost of warehousing human talent in prison, the economic costs of racism are real and measurable.

As a psychologist, I often hear about the less easily measured costs. When I ask White men and women how racism hurts them, they frequently talk about their fears of people of color, the social incompetence they feel in racially mixed situations, the alienation they have experienced between parents and children when a child marries into a family of color, and the interracial friendships they had as children that were lost in adolescence or young adulthood without their ever understanding why. White people are paying a significant price for the system of advantage. The cost is not as high for Whites as it is for people of color, but a price is being paid.⁹ Wendell Berry, a White writer raised in Kentucky, captures this psychic pain in the opening pages of his book, *The Hidden Wound*:

If white people have suffered less obviously from racism than black people, they have nevertheless suffered greatly; the cost has been greater perhaps than we can yet know. If the white man has inflicted the wound of racism upon black men, the cost has been that he would receive the mirror image of that wound into himself. As the master, or as a member of the dominant race, he has felt little compulsion to acknowledge it or speak of it; the more painful it has grown the more deeply he has hidden it within himself. But the wound is there, and it is a profound disorder, as great a damage in his mind as it is in his society.¹⁰

The dismantling of racism is in the best interests of everyone.

A Word About Language

Throughout this chapter I have used the term *White* to refer to Americans of European descent. In another era, I might have used the term *Caucasian*. I have used the term *people of color* to refer to those groups in America that are and have been historically targeted by racism. This includes people of African descent, people of Asian descent, people of Latin American descent, and indigenous peoples (sometimes referred to as Native Americans or American Indians).¹¹ Many people refer to these groups collectively as non-Whites. This term is particularly offensive because it defines groups of people in terms of what they are not. (Do we call women “non-men?”) I also avoid using the term *minorities* because it represents another kind of distortion of information which we need to correct. So-called minorities represent the majority of the world’s population. While the term *people of color* is inclusive, it is not perfect. As a workshop participant once said, White people have color, too. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say “people of more color,” though I am not ready to make that change. Perhaps fellow psychologist Linda James Myers is on the right track. She refers to two groups of people, those of acknowledged African descent and those of unacknowledged African descent, reminding us that we can all trace the roots of our common humanity to Africa.

I refer to people of acknowledged African descent as Black. I know that *African American* is also a commonly used term, and I often refer to myself and other Black people born and raised in America in that way. Perhaps because I am a child of the 1960s “Black and beautiful” era, I still prefer *Black*. The term is more inclusive than *African American*, because there are Black people in the United States who are not African American—Afro-Caribbeans, for example—yet are targeted by racism, and are identified as Black.

When referring to other groups of color, I try to use the terms that the people themselves want to be called. In some cases, there is no clear consensus. For example, some people of Latin American ancestry prefer *Latino*, while others prefer *Hispanic* or, if of Mexican descent, *Chicano*.¹² The terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably here. Similarly, there are regional variations in the use of the terms *Native American*, *American Indian*, and *Indian*. *American Indian* and *Native people* are now more widely used than *Native American*, and the language used here reflects that. People of Asian descent include Pacific Islanders, and that is reflected in the terms *Asian/Pacific Islanders* and *Asian Pacific Americans*. However, when quoting others I use whichever terms they use.

My dilemma about the language to use reflects the fact that race is a social construction.¹³ Despite myths to the contrary, biologists tell us that the only meaningful racial categorization is that of human. Van den Berghe defines race as “a group that is socially defined but on the basis of *physical* criteria,” including skin color and facial features.¹⁴

Racial identity development, a central focus of this book, usually refers to the process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group. The terms *racial identity* and *ethnic identity* are often used synonymously, though a

distinction can be made between the two. An ethnic group is a socially defined group based on *cultural* criteria, such as language, customs, and shared history. An individual might identify as a member of an ethnic group (Irish or Italian, for example) but might not think of himself in racial terms (as White). On the other hand, one may recognize the personal significance of racial group membership (identifying as Black, for instance) but may not consider ethnic identity (such as West Indian) as particularly meaningful.

Both racial and ethnic categories are socially constructed, and social definitions of these categories have changed over time. For example, in his book *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*, Richard Alba points out that the high rates of intermarriage and the dissolution of other social boundaries among European ethnic groups in the United States have reduced the significance of ethnic identity for these groups. In their place, he argues, a new ethnic identity is emerging, that of European American.¹⁵

Throughout this book, I refer primarily to racial identity. It is important, however, to acknowledge that ethnic identity and racial identity sometimes intersect. For example, dark-skinned Puerto Ricans may identify culturally as Puerto Rican and yet be categorized racially by others as Black on the basis of physical appearance. In the case of either racial or ethnic identity, these identities remain most salient to individuals of racial or ethnic groups that have been historically disadvantaged or marginalized.

The language we use to categorize one another racially is imperfect. These categories are still evolving as the current debate over Census classifications indicates.¹⁶ The original creation of racial categories was in the service of oppression. Some may argue that to continue to use them is to continue that oppression. I respect that argument. Yet it is difficult to talk about what is essentially a flawed and problematic social construct without using language that is itself problematic. We have to be able to talk about it in order to change it. So this is the language I choose.

Notes

- 1 C. O'Toole, "The effect of the media and multicultural education on children's perceptions of Native Americans" (senior thesis, Department of Psychology and Education, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA, May 1990).
- 2 For an extended discussion of this point, see David Wellman, *Portraits of White racism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), ch. 1.
- 3 For specific statistical information, see R. Farley, "The common destiny of Blacks and Whites: Observations about the social and economic status of the races," pp. 197–233 in H. Hill and J. E. Jones, Jr. (Eds.), *Race in America: The struggle for equality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

- 4 P. McIntosh, "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack," *Peace and Freedom* (July/August 1989): 10–12.
- 5 For further discussion of the concept of "belief in a just world," see M. J. Lerner, "Social psychology of justice and interpersonal attraction," in T. Huston (Ed.), *Foundations of interpersonal attraction* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
- 6 For a brief historical overview of the institutionalization of racism and sexism in our legal system, see "Part V: How it happened: Race and gender issues in U.S. law," in P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study*, 3d ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).
- 7 P. A. Wentworth, "The identity development of non-traditionally aged first-generation women college students: An exploratory study" (master's thesis, Department of Psychology and Education, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA, 1994).
- 8 W. L. Updegrave, "Race and money," *Money* (December 1989): 152–72.
- 9 For further discussion of the impact of racism on Whites, see B. Bowser and R. G. Hunt (Eds.), *Impacts of racism on White Americans* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1981); P. Kivel, *Uprooting racism: How White people can work for racial justice* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1996); and J. Barndt, *Dismantling racism: The continuing challenge to White America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1991).
- 10 W. Berry, *The hidden wound* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989), pp. 3–4.
- 11 It is important to note here that these groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, people of Latin American descent may have European, African, and Native American ancestors. The politics of racial categorization has served to create artificial boundaries between groups with shared ancestry.
- 12 It is difficult to know which is the preferred term to use because different subgroups have different preferences. According to Amado Padilla, younger U.S.-born university-educated individuals of Mexican ancestry prefer *Chicano(a)* to *Mexican American* or *Hispanic*. On the other hand, *Latino* is preferred by others of Mexican ancestry or other Latin American origin. Those of Cuban ancestry may prefer *Cuban American* to *Latino*, whereas recent immigrants from Central America would rather be identified by their nationality (e.g., *Guatemaltecos* or *Salvadoreños*). A. Padilla (Ed.), *Hispanic psychology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995).
- 13 For an expanded discussion of the social construction of race, see M. Omi and H. Winant, *Racial formation in the United States*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994).
- 14 P. L. Van den Berghe, *Race and racism* (New York: Wiley, 1967).
- 15 See R. Alba, *Ethnic identity: The transformation of White America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
- 16 For a discussion of the census classification debate and the history of racial classification in the United States, see L. Wright, "One drop of blood," *The New Yorker* (July 25, 1994): 46–55.

The Possessive Investment in Whiteness

George Lipsitz

Blacks are often confronted, in American life, with such devastating examples of the white descent from dignity; devastating not only because of the enormity of white pretensions, but because this swift and graceless descent would seem to indicate that white people have no principles whatever.

—JAMES BALDWIN

Shortly after World War II, a French reporter asked expatriate Richard Wright for his views about the “Negro problem” in America. The author replied, “There isn’t any Negro problem; there is only a white problem.”¹ By inverting the reporter’s question, Wright called attention to its hidden assumptions—that racial polarization comes from the existence of blacks rather than from the behavior of whites, that black people are a “problem” for whites rather than fellow citizens entitled to justice, and that, unless otherwise specified, “Americans” means “whites.”² Wright’s formulation also placed political mobilization by African Americans during the civil rights era in context, connecting black disadvantages to white advantages and finding the roots of black consciousness in the systemic practices of aversion, exploitation, denigration, and discrimination practiced by people who think of themselves as “white.”

Whiteness is everywhere in U.S. culture, but it is very hard to see. As Richard Dyer suggests, “[W]hite power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular.”³ As the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations.⁴ To identify, analyze, and oppose the destructive consequences of whiteness, we need what Walter Benjamin called “presence of mind.”

George Lipsitz, “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness,” *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, pp. 1-23, 250-254. Copyright © 2006 by Temple University Press. Reprinted with permission.

Benjamin wrote that people visit fortune-tellers less out of a desire to know the future than out of a fear of not noticing some important aspect of the present. “Presence of mind,” he suggested, “is an abstract of the future, and precise awareness of the present moment more decisive than foreknowledge of the most distant events.”⁵ In U.S. society at this time, precise awareness of the present moment requires an understanding of the existence and the destructive consequences of the possessive investment in whiteness that surreptitiously shapes so much of our public and private lives.

Race is a cultural construct, but one with deadly social causes and consequences. Conscious and deliberate actions have institutionalized group identity in the United States, not just through the dissemination of cultural stories, but also through the creation of social structures that generate economic advantages for European Americans through the possessive investment in whiteness. Studies of racial culture too far removed from studies of social structure leave us with inadequate explanations for understanding and combating racism.

Desire for slave labor encouraged European settlers in North America to view, first, Native Americans and, later, African Americans as racially inferior people suited “by nature” for the humiliating subordination of involuntary servitude. The long history of the possessive investment in whiteness stems in no small measure from the fact that all subsequent immigrants to North America have come to an already racialized society. From the start, European settlers in North America established structures encouraging a possessive investment in whiteness. The colonial and early national legal systems authorized attacks on Native Americans and encouraged the appropriation of their lands. They protected racialized chattel slavery, limited naturalized citizenship to “white” immigrants, excluded immigrants from Asia as expressly unwelcome (through legislation aimed at China in 1882, India in 1917, Japan in 1924, and the Philippines in 1934), and provided pretexts, rationales, and procedures for restricting the citizenship, exploiting the labor, and seizing the property of Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans.⁶

The possessive investment in whiteness is not a simple matter of black and white; all racialized minority groups have suffered from it, albeit to different degrees and in different ways. The African slave trade began in earnest only after large-scale Native American slavery proved impractical in North America. Efforts to abolish African slavery led initially to the importation of low-wage labor from Asia. Legislation banning immigration from Asia set the stage for the recruitment of low-wage labor from Mexico. All of the new racial hierarchies that emerged in each of these eras revolved around applying racial labels to “nonwhite” groups in order to stigmatize and exploit them, while at the same time reserving extra value for whiteness.

Although reproduced in new form in every era, the possessive investment in whiteness has always been influenced by its origins in the racialized history of the United States—by the legacy of slavery and segregation, of “Indian” extermination and immigrant restriction, of conquest and colonialism. Although slavery has existed in many countries without any particular racial dimensions to it, the slave system that emerged in North America soon took on distinctly racial forms. Africans

enslaved in North America faced a racialized system of power that reserved permanent, hereditary, chattel slavery for black people. White settlers institutionalized a possessive investment in whiteness by making blackness synonymous with slavery and whiteness synonymous with freedom, but also by pitting people of color against one another. Fearful of alliances between Native Americans and African Americans that might challenge the prerogatives of whiteness, white settlers prohibited slaves and free blacks from traveling in “Indian country.” European Americans used diplomacy and force to compel Native Americans to return runaway slaves to their white masters. During the Stono Rebellion of 1739, colonial authorities offered Native Americans a bounty for every rebellious slave they captured or killed. At the same time, British settlers recruited black slaves to fight against Native Americans within colonial militias.⁷ The power of whiteness depended not only on white hegemony over separate racialized groups, but also on manipulating racial outsiders to fight against one another, to compete with each other for white approval, and to seek the rewards and privileges of whiteness for themselves at the expense of other racialized populations.

Aggrieved communities of color have often curried favor with whites in order to make gains at each other’s expense. In the nineteenth century some Native Americans held black slaves (in part because whites viewed slave ownership as a “civilized” European American practice that would improve Indians). Some of the first regular African American units in the U.S. army went to war against Comanches in Texas and served as security forces for wagon trains of white settlers on the trails to California. The defeat of the Comanches in the 1870s sparked a mass migration by Spanish-speaking residents of New Mexico into the areas of West Texas formerly occupied by the vanquished Native Americans.⁸ Immigrants from Asia sought the rewards of whiteness for themselves by asking the courts to recognize them as “white” and therefore eligible for naturalized citizenship according to the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1790; Mexican Americans also insisted on being classified as white. In the early twentieth century, black soldiers accustomed to fighting Native Americans in the Southwest participated in the U.S. occupation of the Philippines and the punitive expedition against Pancho Villa in Mexico.⁹ Asian American managers cracked down on efforts by Mexican American farm workers to form unions in the fields, while the Pullman Company tried to break the African American Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters by importing Filipinos to work as porters. Mexican Americans and blacks took possession of some of the property confiscated from Japanese Americans during the internment of the 1940s, and Asian Americans, blacks, and Mexican Americans all secured advantages for themselves by cooperating with the exploitation of Native Americans.

Yet while every racialized minority group has sometimes sought the rewards of whiteness, these groups have also been able to form interethnic antiracist alliances. Native American tribes often harbored runaway slaves and drew upon their expertise in combat against whites. In 1711, an African named Harry helped lead the Tuscaroras against the British.¹⁰ Native Americans secured the cooperation of black slaves in their attacks on the French settlement near Natchez in colonial Louisiana in 1729, and black Seminoles in Florida routinely recruited slaves from Georgia plantations to their side in battles against European Americans.¹¹ African Americans

resisting slavery and white supremacy in the United States during the nineteenth century sometimes looked to Mexico as a refuge (especially after that nation abolished slavery), and in the twentieth century the rise of Japan as a successful nonwhite world power served as one source of inspiration and emulation among African American nationalists. In 1903, Mexican American and Japanese American farm workers joined forces in Oxnard, California to wage a successful strike in the beet fields, and subsequently members of the two groups organized an interracial union, the Japanese Mexican Labor Association.¹² Yet whether characterized by conflict or cooperation, all relations among aggrieved racialized minorities stemmed from recognition of the rewards of whiteness and the concomitant penalties imposed upon “nonwhite” populations.

The possessive investment in whiteness today is not simply the residue of conquest and colonialism, of slavery and segregation, of immigrant exclusion and “Indian” extermination. Contemporary whiteness and its rewards have been created and recreated by policies adopted long after the emancipation of slaves in the 1860s and even after the outlawing of de jure segregation in the 1960s. There has always been racism in the United States, but it has not always been the same racism. Racism has changed over time, taking on different forms and serving different social purposes in each time period. Antiracist mobilizations during the Civil War and civil rights eras meaningfully curtailed the reach and scope of white supremacy, but in each case reactionary forces engineered a renewal of racism in new forms during succeeding decades.

Contemporary racism has been created anew in many ways over the past half century, most dramatically by the putatively race-neutral, liberal, social democratic reforms of the New Deal Era and by the more overtly race-conscious neoconservative reactions against liberalism since the Nixon years. It is a mistake to posit a gradual and inevitable trajectory of evolutionary progress in race relations; on the contrary, our history shows that battles won at one moment can later be lost. Despite hard-fought struggles for change that secured important concessions during the 1960s in the form of civil rights legislation, the racialized nature of social policy in the United States since the Great Depression has actually increased the possessive investment in whiteness among European Americans over the past five decades.

During the New Deal Era of the 1930s and 1940s, both the Wagner Act and the Social Security Act excluded farm workers and domestics from coverage, effectively denying those disproportionately minority sectors of the work force protections and benefits routinely afforded whites. The Federal Housing Act of 1934 brought home ownership within reach of millions of citizens by placing the credit of the federal government behind private lending to home buyers, but overtly racist categories in the Federal Housing Agency’s (FHA) “confidential” city surveys and appraisers’ manuals channeled almost all of the loan money toward whites and away from communities of color.¹³ In the post–World War II era, trade unions negotiated contract provisions giving private medical insurance, pensions, and job security largely to the white workers who formed the overwhelming majority of the unionized work force in mass production industries, rather than fighting for full employment, medical care, and old-age pensions for all, while avoiding the fight for an end to discriminatory hiring and promotion practices by employers in those industries.¹⁴

Each of these policies widened the gap between the resources available to whites and those available to aggrieved racial communities. Federal housing policy offers an important illustration of the broader principles at work in the possessive investment in whiteness. By channeling loans away from older inner-city neighborhoods and toward white home buyers moving into segregated suburbs, the FHA and private lenders after World War II aided and abetted segregation in U.S. residential neighborhoods. FHA appraisers denied federally supported loans to prospective home buyers in the racially mixed Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1939, for example, because the area struck them as a “‘melting pot’ area literally honeycombed with diverse and subversive racial elements.”¹⁵ Similarly, mostly white St. Louis County secured five times as many FHA mortgages as the more racially mixed city of St. Louis between 1943 and 1960. Home buyers in the county received six times as much loan money and enjoyed per capita mortgage spending 6.3 times greater than those in the city.¹⁶

The federal government has played a major role in augmenting the possessive investment in whiteness created by systematic racial discrimination in the private sector. For years, the General Services Administration routinely channeled the government’s rental and leasing business to realtors who engaged in racial discrimination, while federally subsidized urban renewal plans reduced the already limited supply of housing for communities of color through “slum clearance” programs. In concert with FHA support for segregation in the suburbs, federal and state tax monies routinely funded the construction of water supplies and sewage facilities for racially exclusive suburban communities in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1960s, these areas often incorporated themselves as independent municipalities in order to gain greater access to federal funds allocated for “urban aid.”¹⁷

At the same time that FHA loans and federal highway building projects subsidized the growth of segregated suburbs, urban renewal programs in cities throughout the country devastated minority neighborhoods. Between the 1930s and the 1970s, urban renewal demolished some sixteen hundred black neighborhoods in cities north and south. This systematic destruction of individual and collective ecosystems exacted an enormous financial and emotional cost on black communities. Clinical psychiatrist and public health specialist Mindy Thompson Fullilove argues that urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century was of sufficient scale and scope that it produced a profound alienation, a collective traumatic stress reaction that she describes as “root shock.”¹⁸ During the 1950s and 1960s, federally assisted urban renewal projects destroyed 20 percent of the central-city housing units occupied by blacks, as opposed to only 10 percent of those inhabited by whites.¹⁹ More than 60 percent of those displaced by urban renewal were African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, or members of other minority racial groups.²⁰ The Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration financed more than \$120 billion worth of new housing between 1934 and 1962, but less than 2 percent of this real estate was available to nonwhite families—and most of that small amount was located in segregated areas.²¹

Even in the 1970s, after most major urban renewal programs had been completed, black central-city residents continued to lose housing units at a rate equal to 80 percent of what had

been lost in the 1960s. White displacement during those same years declined to the relatively low levels of the 1950s.²² In addition, the refusal first to pass, then later to enforce, fair housing laws has enabled realtors, buyers, and sellers to profit from racist collusion against minorities largely without fear of legal retribution. During the decades following World War II, urban renewal helped construct a new “white” identity in the suburbs by helping to destroy ethnically specific European American urban inner-city neighborhoods. Wrecking balls and bulldozers eliminated some of these sites, while others were transformed by an influx of minority residents desperately competing for a declining supply of affordable housing units. As increasing numbers of racial minorities moved into cities, increasing numbers of European American ethnics moved out. Consequently, ethnic differences among whites became a less important dividing line in U.S. culture, while race became more important. The suburbs helped turn Euro-Americans into “whites” who could live near each other and intermarry with relatively little difficulty. But this “white” unity rested on residential segregation, on shared access to housing and life chances largely unavailable to communities of color.²³

During the 1950s and 1960s, local “pro-growth” coalitions led by liberal mayors often justified urban renewal as a program designed to build more housing for poor people. In reality, urban renewal destroyed more housing than it created. Ninety percent of the low-income units removed for urban renewal projects during the entire history of the program were never replaced. Commercial, industrial, and municipal projects occupied more than 80 percent of the land cleared for these projects, with less than 20 percent allocated for replacement housing. In addition, the loss of taxable properties and the tax abatements granted to new enterprises in urban renewal zones often meant serious tax increases for poor, working-class, and middle-class home owners and renters.²⁴ Although the percentage of black suburban dwellers also increased during this period, no significant desegregation of the suburbs took place. Four million whites moved out of central cities between 1960 and 1977, while the number of whites living in suburbs increased by 22 million; during the same years, the inner-city black population grew by 6 million, but the number of blacks living in suburbs increased by only 500,000.²⁵ By 1993, 86 percent of suburban whites still lived in places with a black population below 1 percent. At the same time, cities with large numbers of minority residents found themselves cut off from loans by the FHA. Because of their growing black and Puerto Rican populations, not a single FHA-sponsored mortgage went to either Camden or Paterson, New Jersey, in 1966.²⁶

In 1968, lobbyists for the banking industry helped draft the Housing and Urban Development Act which allowed private lenders to shift the risks of financing low-income housing to the government, creating a lucrative and thoroughly unregulated market for themselves. One section of the 1968 bill authorized FHA mortgages for inner-city areas that did not meet the usual eligibility criteria. Another section subsidized interest payments by low-income families. If administered wisely, these provisions might have promoted fair housing goals, but FHA administrators deployed them in ways that actually promoted segregation in order to provide banks, brokers, lenders, developers, realtors, and speculators with windfall profits. As a U.S. Commission on Civil

Rights investigation later revealed, FHA officials collaborated with blockbusters in financing the flight of low income whites out of inner city neighborhoods, and then aided unscrupulous realtors and speculators by arranging purchases of substandard housing by minorities desperate to own their own homes. The resulting sales and mortgage foreclosures brought great profits to lenders (almost all of them white), but their actions led to price fixing and a subsequent inflation of housing costs in the inner city by more than 200 percent between 1968 and 1972. Bankers then foreclosed on the mortgages of thousands of these uninspected and substandard homes, ruining many inner-city neighborhoods. In response, the Department of Housing and Urban Development essentially red-lined inner cities, making them ineligible for future loans, a decision that destroyed the value of inner-city housing for generations to come.²⁷

Federally funded high ways built to transport suburban commuters to down-town places of employment also destroyed already scarce housing in minority communities, often disrupting neighborhood life as well. Construction of the Harbor Freeway in Los Angeles, the Gulf Freeway in Houston, and the Mark Twain Freeway in St. Louis displaced thousands of residents and bisected neighborhoods, shopping districts, and political precincts. The processes of urban renewal and highway construction set in motion a vicious cycle: population loss led to decreased political power, which made minority neighborhoods more vulnerable to further urban renewal and freeway construction, not to mention more susceptible to the placement of prisons, incinerators, toxic waste dumps, and other projects that further depopulated these areas.

In Houston, Texas—where blacks make up slightly more than one quarter of the local population—more than 75 percent of municipal garbage incinerators and 100 percent of the city-owned garbage dumps are located in black neighborhoods.²⁸ A 1992 study by staff writers for the *National Law Journal* examining the Environmental Protection Agency's response to 1,177 toxic waste cases found that polluters of sites near the greatest white populations received penalties 500 percent higher than penalties imposed on polluters in minority areas—an average of \$335,566 for white areas contrasted with \$55,318 for minority areas. Income did not account for these differences—penalties for low-income areas on average actually exceeded those for areas with the highest median incomes by about 3 percent. The penalties for violating all federal environmental laws regulating air, water, and waste pollution were 46 percent lower in minority communities than in white communities. In addition, superfund remedies left minority communities waiting longer than white communities to be placed on the national priority list, with cleanups that began from 12 to 42 percent later than at white sites, and with a 7 percent greater likelihood of “containment” (walling off a hazardous site) than cleanup, while white sites experienced treatment and cleanup 22 percent more often than containment.²⁹

The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's 1988 survey of children suffering from lead poisoning showed that among families with incomes under \$6,000 per year, 36 percent of white children but 68 percent of black children suffered from excess lead in their bloodstreams. Among families with incomes above \$15,000 per year, only 12 percent of white children but 38 percent of black children suffered from toxic levels of lead.³⁰ In the Los Angeles

area today, only 34 percent of whites inhabit areas with the most polluted air, but 71 percent of African Americans and 50 percent of Latinos live in neighborhoods with the highest levels of air pollution.³¹ Nationwide, 60 percent of African Americans and Latinos live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites.³²

Scholarly studies reveal that even when adjusted for income, education, and occupational status, aggrieved racial minorities encounter higher levels of exposure to toxic substances than white people experience.³³ In 1987, the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ found race to be the most significant variable in determining the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities.³⁴ In a review of sixty-four studies examining environmental disparities, the National Wildlife Federation discovered that racial disparities outnumbered disparities by income. In cases where disparities in race and income were both present, race proved to be more important in twenty-two out of thirty tests.³⁵ As Robert D. Bullard concludes, “race has been found to be an independent factor, not reducible to class” in predicting exposure to a broad range of environmental hazards, including polluted air, contaminated fish, lead poisoning, municipal landfills, incinerators, and toxic waste dumps.³⁶ The combination of exposure to environmental hazards and employment discrimination establishes a sinister correlation between race and health. One recent government study revealed that the likelihood of dying from malnutrition was two and a half times greater among African Americans than among European Americans.³⁷ Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles are more than seven times as likely to contract tuberculosis as whites. Corporations systematically target Native American reservations when looking for locations for hazardous waste incinerators, solid waste landfills, and nuclear waste storage facilities. Navajo teenagers develop reproductive organ cancer at seventeen times the national average because of their exposure to radiation from uranium mines.³⁸ Latinos in East Los Angeles encounter some of the worst smog and the highest concentrations of air toxins in southern California because of prevailing wind patterns and the concentration of polluting industries, freeways, and toxic waste dumps. In the Chicano neighborhoods of Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, and Sherman Heights in San Diego, local industries spew three million pounds of toxic pollution into the air every year. These neighborhoods account for little more than two percent of the population of San Diego County, but more than a third of the county’s hazardous wastes are generated or stored there—some 32 million pounds per year. Twenty-eight percent of Latino children in these neighborhoods (and those adjacent to them in Southeast San Diego) have been diagnosed with probable or possible asthma—about four times the national average.³⁹ Environmental racism makes the possessive investment in whiteness literally a matter of life and death; if African Americans had access to the nutrition, health care, and protection against environmental hazards offered routinely to whites, seventy-five thousand fewer of them would die each year.⁴⁰

Minorities are less likely than whites to receive either preventive medical care or costly remedial operations from Medicare. Eligible members of minority communities are also less likely than European Americans to apply for food stamps.⁴¹ The labor of migrant farm workers from aggrieved racialized groups plays a vital role in providing adequate nutrition for others,

but the farm workers and their children suffer disproportionately from health disorders caused by malnutrition.⁴² In her important research on health policy and ethnic diversity, Linda Wray concludes that “the lower life expectancies for many ethnic minority groups and subgroups stem largely from their disproportionately higher rates of poverty, malnutrition, and poor health care.”⁴³

Just as residential segregation and urban renewal make minority communities disproportionately susceptible to health hazards, their physical and social locations give these communities a different relationship to the criminal justice system. A 1990 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse revealed that while only 15 percent of the thirteen million habitual drug users in the United States were black and 77 percent were white, African Americans were four times more likely to be arrested on drug charges than whites in the nation as a whole, and seven to nine times more likely in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. A 1989 study by the Parent’s Resource Institute for Drug Education discovered that African American high school students consistently showed lower levels of drug and alcohol use than their European American counterparts, even in high schools populated by residents of low-income housing projects. Yet while comprising only about 12 percent of the U.S. population, blacks accounted for 10 percent of drug arrests in 1984, 40 percent in 1988, and 42 percent in 1990. In addition, white drug defendants receive considerably shorter average prison terms than African Americans convicted of comparable crimes. A U.S. Sentencing Commission study found in 1992 that half of the federal court districts that handled cases involving crack cocaine prosecuted minority defendants exclusively. A *Los Angeles Times* article in 1995 revealed that “black and Latino crack dealers are hammered with 10-year mandatory federal sentences while whites prosecuted in state court face a minimum of five years and often receive no more than a year in jail.” Alexander Lichtenstein and Michael A. Kroll point out that sentences for African Americans in the federal prison system are 20 percent longer than those given to whites who commit the same crimes. They observe that if blacks received the same sentences as whites for these offenses, the federal prison system would require three thousand fewer prison cells, enough to close completely six of the newly constructed five-hundred bed institutions.⁴⁴

Racial animus on the part of police officers, prosecutors, and judges accounts for only a small portion of the distinctive experience that racial minorities have with the criminal justice system. Economic devastation makes the drug trade appealing to some people in the inner city, while the dearth of capital in minority neighborhoods curtails opportunities for other kinds of employment. Deindustrialization, unemployment, and lack of intergenerational transfers of wealth undermine parental and adult authority in many neighborhoods. The complex factors that cause people to turn to drugs are no more prevalent in minority communities than elsewhere, but these communities and their inhabitants face more stress while having fewer opportunities to receive private counseling and treatment for their problems.

The structural weaknesses of minority neighborhoods caused by discrimination in housing, education, and hiring also play crucial roles in relations between inner-city residents and the criminal justice system. Cocaine dealing, which initially skyrocketed among white suburban

residents, was driven into the inner city by escalating enforcement pressures in wealthy white communities. Ghettos and barrios became distribution centers for the sale of drugs to white suburbanites. Former New York and Houston police commissioner Lee Brown, head of the federal government's antidrug efforts during the early years of the Clinton presidency, and later mayor of Houston, noted, "There are those who bring drugs into the country. That's not the black community. Then you have wholesalers, those who distribute them once they get here, and as a rule that's not the black community. Where you find the blacks is in the street dealing."⁴⁵

You also find blacks and other minorities in prison. Police officers in large cities, pressured to show results in the drive against drugs, lack the resources to effectively enforce the law everywhere (in part because of the social costs of deindustrialization and the tax limitation initiatives designed to shrink the size of government). These officers know that it is easier to make arrests and to secure convictions by confronting drug users in areas that have conspicuous street corner sales, that have more people out on the street with no place to go, and that have residents more likely to plead guilty and less likely to secure the services of attorneys who can get the charges against them dropped, reduced, or wiped off the books with subsequent successful counseling and rehabilitation. In addition, politicians supported by the public relations efforts of neoconservative foundations often portray themselves to suburban voters as opponents of the "dangerous classes" in the inner cities.

Minority disadvantages craft advantages for others. Urban renewal failed to provide new housing for the poor, but it played an important role in transforming the U.S. urban economy from one that relied on factory production to one driven by producer services. Urban renewal projects subsidized the development of downtown office centers on previously residential land, and they frequently created buffer zones of empty blocks dividing poor neighborhoods from new shopping centers designed for affluent commuters. To help cities compete for corporate investment by making them appealing to high-level executives, federal urban aid favored construction of luxury housing units and cultural centers like symphony halls and art museums over affordable housing for workers. Tax abatements granted to these producer services centers further aggravated the fiscal crises that cities faced, leading to tax increases on existing industries, businesses, and residences.

Workers from aggrieved racial minorities bore the brunt of this transformation. Because the 1964 Civil Rights Act came so late, minority workers who received jobs because of it found themselves more vulnerable to seniority-based layoffs when businesses automated or transferred operations overseas. Although the act initially made real progress in reducing employment discrimination, lessening the gaps between rich and poor and between black and white workers while helping to bring minority poverty to its lowest level in history in 1973, that year's recession initiated a reversal of minority progress and a reassertion of white privilege.⁴⁶ In 1977, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission reported on the disproportionate impact of layoffs on minority workers. In cases where minority workers made up only 10 to 12 percent of the work force in their area in 1974, they accounted for 60 to 70 percent of those laid off. The principle of seniority, a trade

union triumph designed to protect workers from age discrimination, in this case guaranteed that minority workers would suffer most from technological changes, because the legacy of past discrimination by their employers left them with less seniority than white workers.⁴⁷

When housing prices increased dramatically during the 1970s, white homeowners who had been able to take advantage of discriminatory FHA financing policies in the past realized increased equity in their homes, while those excluded from the housing market by earlier policies found themselves facing even higher costs of entry into the market in addition to the traditional obstacles presented by the discriminatory practices of sellers, realtors, and lenders. The contrast between European Americans and African Americans is instructive in this regard. Because whites have access to broader housing choices than do blacks, whites pay 15 percent less than blacks for similar housing in the same neighborhood. White neighborhoods typically experience housing costs 25 percent lower than would be the case if the residents were black.⁴⁸

A Federal Reserve Bank of Boston study revealed that Boston bankers made 2.9 times as many mortgage loans per 1,000 housing units in neighborhoods inhabited by low-income whites than in neighborhoods populated by low-income blacks.⁴⁹ In addition, loan officers were far more likely to overlook flaws in the credit records of white applicants or to arrange creative financing for them than they were with black applicants.⁵⁰ A Los Angeles study found that loan officers more frequently used dividend income and underlying assets as criteria for judging black applicants than for whites.⁵¹ In Houston, the NCNB Bank of Texas disqualified only 13 percent of middle-income white loan applicants but 36 percent of middle-income black applicants.⁵² Atlanta's home loan institutions gave five times as many home loans to whites as to blacks in the late 1980s. An analysis of sixteen Atlanta neighborhoods found that home buyers in white neighborhoods received conventional financing four times as often as those in black sections of the city.⁵³ Nationwide, financial institutions receive more money in deposits from black neighborhoods than they invest in them in the form of home mortgage loans, making home lending a vehicle for the transfer of capital away from black savers toward white investors.⁵⁴ In many locations, high-income blacks were denied loans more often than low-income whites.⁵⁵

When confronted with evidence of systematic racial bias in home lending, defenders of the possessive investment in whiteness argue that the disproportionate share of loan denials to members of minority groups stems not from discrimination, but from the low net worth of minority applicants, even those who have high incomes. This might seem a reasonable position, but net worth is almost totally determined by past opportunities for asset accumulation, and therefore is the one figure most likely to reflect the history of discrimination. Minorities are told, in essence, "We can't give you a loan today because we've discriminated against members of your race so effectively in the past that you have not been able to accumulate any equity from housing to pass down through the generations."

Most white families have acquired their net worth from the appreciation of property that they secured under conditions of special privilege in a discriminatory housing market. In their prize-winning book *Black Wealth/White Wealth*, Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro demonstrate

how the history of housing discrimination gives white parents special advantages to borrow funds for their children's college education or to loan money to their children to enter the housing market. In addition, much discrimination in home lending is not based on considerations of net worth; it stems from decisions made by white banking officials based on their stereotypes about minority communities. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston study showed that black and Latino mortgage applicants are 60 percent more likely to be turned down for loans than whites, even after controlling for employment, financial, and neighborhood characteristics.⁵⁶ Ellis Cose reports on a white bank official confronted with evidence at a board of directors' meeting that his bank denied loans to blacks who had credit histories and earnings equal to those of white applicants who received loans. The banker replied that the information indicated that the bank needed to do a better job of "affirmative action," but one of his colleagues pointed out that the problem had nothing to do with affirmative action—the bank was simply letting prejudice stand in the way of its own best interests by rejecting loans that should have been approved.⁵⁷

Yet bankers also profit from the ways in which discrimination creates artificial scarcities in the market. Minorities have to pay more for housing because much of the market is off limits to them. Blockbusters profit from exploiting white fears and provoking them into panic selling. Minority home owners denied loans in mainstream banks often turn to predatory lenders who make "low end" loans at enormously high interest rates. If they fail to pay back these loans, regular banks can acquire the property cheaply and charge someone else exorbitant interest for a loan on the same property.

Federal home loan policies have put the power of the federal government at the service of private discrimination. Urban renewal and highway construction programs have enhanced the possessive investment in whiteness directly through government initiatives. In addition, decisions about where to locate federal jobs have also systematically subsidized whiteness. Federal civilian employment dropped by 41,419 in central cities between 1966 and 1973, but total federal employment in metropolitan areas grew by 26,558.⁵⁸ While one might naturally expect the location of government buildings that serve the public to follow population trends, the federal government's policy of locating offices and records centers in suburbs aggravated the flight of jobs to suburban locations less accessible to inner-city residents. Because racial discrimination in the private sector forces minority workers to seek government positions disproportionate to their numbers, these moves exact particular hardships on them. In addition, minorities who follow their jobs to the suburbs must generally allocate more for commuter costs, because housing discrimination makes it harder and more expensive for them than for whites to relocate.

The policies of neoconservatives in the Reagan and Bush administrations during the 1980s and 1990s greatly exacerbated the racialized aspects of more than fifty years of these social welfare policies. Regressive policies that cut federal aid to education and refused to challenge segregated education, housing, and hiring, as well as the cynical cultivation of an antiblack consensus through attacks on affirmative action and voting rights legislation clearly reinforced

possessive investments in whiteness. In the U.S. economy, where 86 percent of available jobs do not appear in classified ads and where personal connections prove the most important factor in securing employment, attacks on affirmative action guarantee that whites will be rewarded for their historical advantage in the labor market rather than for their individual abilities or efforts.⁵⁹

Attacking the civil rights tradition serves many functions for neoconservatives. By mobilizing existing racisms and generating new ones, neoconservatives seek to discredit the egalitarian and democratic social movements of the post-World War II era and to connect the attacks by those movements on wealth, special privilege, and elite control over education and opportunity to despised and unworthy racial “others”.

Attacks on the gains made by civil rights activism also act as a wedge to divide potentially progressive coalitions along racial lines, a strategy that attained its peak moment with the defection of “blue collar” trade unionists from the Democratic Party in the 1980s to become “Reagan Democrats.” In addition to protecting centralized power and wealth and dividing its opponents, the neoracism of contemporary conservatism also functions as an important unifying symbol for a disparate and sometimes antagonistic coalition that includes Hamiltonian big-government conservatives as well as antistate libertarians, that incorporates born-again Christians seeking Divine blessings into an alliance with “objectivist” free market thinkers who celebrate selfishness and view the love of gain as the engine of human progress. This coalition often has trouble agreeing on the things it favors, but it has no difficulty agreeing about what to be against, especially the allegedly bad behavior and inferior morality of minority individuals and communities. Most important, by generating an ever-repeating cycle of “moral panics” about the family, crime, welfare, race, and terrorism, neoconservatives produce a perpetual state of anxiety that obscures the actual failures of conservatism as economic and social policy, while promoting demands for even more draconian measures of a similar nature for the future. The racism of contemporary conservatism plays a vital role in building a countersubversive consensus because it disguises the social disintegration brought about by neoconservatism itself as the fault of “inferior” social groups, and because it builds a sense of righteous indignation among its constituents that enables them to believe that the selfish and self-interested politics they pursue are actually part of a moral crusade.

Yet even seemingly race-neutral policies supported by both neoconservatives and liberals in the 1980s and 1990s have increased the absolute value of being white. In the 1980s, changes in federal tax laws decreased the value of wage income and increased the value of investment income and inheritance—a move harmful to minorities who suffer from a gap between their total wealth and that of whites even greater than the disparity between their income and white income. The failure to raise the minimum wage between 1981 and 1989 and the decline of more than one-third in the value of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments injured all poor people, but they exacted special on costs on nonwhites, who faced even more constricted markets for employment, housing, and education than poor whites.⁶⁰

Similarly, the “tax reforms” of the 1980s made the effective rate of taxation higher on investment in actual goods and services than on profits from speculative enterprises. This change encouraged the flight of capital from industrial production with its many employment opportunities toward investments that can be turned over quickly to allow the greatest possible tax write-offs. Government policies thus discouraged investments that might produce high-paying jobs and encouraged investors to strip companies of their assets to make rapid short-term profits. These policies hurt almost all workers, but they fell particularly heavily on minority workers, who because of employment discrimination in the retail and small business sectors were overrepresented in blue-collar industrial jobs.

On the other hand, while neoconservative tax policies created incentives for employers to move their enterprises elsewhere, they created disincentives for home owners to move. Measures like California’s Proposition 13 (passed in 1978) granting tax relief to property owners badly misallocate housing resources, because they make it financially unwise for the elderly to move out of large houses, further reducing the supply of housing available to young families. While one can well understand the necessity for protecting senior citizens on fixed incomes from tax increases that would make them lose their homes, the rewards and punishments provided by Proposition 13 are so extreme that they prevent the kinds of generational succession that have routinely opened up housing to young families in the past. This reduction works particular hardships on those who also face discrimination by sellers, realtors, and lending institutions.

Subsidies to the private sector by government agencies also tend to enhance the rewards of past discrimination. Throughout the country, tax increment financing for redevelopment programs offers tax-free and low-interest loans to developers whose projects use public services, often without having to pay taxes to local school boards or county governments. In St. Louis, tax abatements for wealthy corporations deprive the city’s schools (and their majority African American population) of \$17 million a year. Even if these redevelopment projects eventually succeed in increasing municipal revenues through sales and earnings taxes, their proceeds go to funds that pay for the increased services these developments demand (fire and police protection, roads, sewers, electricity, lighting, etc.) rather than to school funds, which are dependent upon property tax revenues.⁶¹ Nation-wide, industrial development bonds resulted in a 7.4 billion dollar tax loss in 1983, which ordinary taxpayers had to make up through increased payroll taxes. Compared to white Americans, people of color—more likely to be poor or working class—suffer disproportionately from these changes as taxpayers, as workers, and as tenants. A study by the Citizens for Tax Justice found that wealthy Californians spend less than eleven cents in taxes for every dollar earned, while poor residents of the state pay fourteen cents out of every dollar in taxes. As groups overrepresented among the poor, minorities have been forced to subsidize the tax breaks given to the wealthy.⁶² While holding property tax assessments for businesses and some home owners to about half of their market value, California’s Proposition 13 deprived cities and counties of \$13 billion a year in taxes. Businesses alone avoided \$3.3 billion to \$8.6 billion in taxes per year under this statute.⁶³

Because they are ignorant of even the recent history of the possessive investment in whiteness—generated initially by slavery and segregation, immigrant exclusion and Native American policy, conquest and colonialism, but augmented more recently by liberal and conservative social policies as well—white Americans produce largely cultural explanations for structural social problems. The increased possessive investment in whiteness generated by disinvestment in U.S. cities, factories, and schools since the 1970s disguises as *racial* problems the general social problems posed by deindustrialization, economic restructuring, and neoconservative attacks on the welfare state and the social wage. It fuels a discourse that demonizes people of color for being victimized by these changes, while hiding the privileges of whiteness. It often attributes the economic advantages enjoyed by whites to their family values, faith, and foresight—rather than to the favoritism they enjoy through their possessive investment in whiteness.

The demonization of black families in public discourse since the 1970s is particularly instructive in this regard. Reluctance to enforce civil rights laws combined with the racialized consequences of economic restructuring and deindustrialization have injured black families. During the 1970s, the share of low-income households headed by blacks increased by one-third. Black family income fell from 60 percent of white family income in 1971 to 58 percent in 1980. Even adjusting for unemployment and for African American disadvantages in life-cycle employment (more injuries, more frequently interrupted work histories, confinement to jobs most susceptible to layoffs), the wages of full-time year-round black workers fell from 77 percent of white workers' income to 73 percent by 1986. In 1986, white workers with high school diplomas earned \$3,000 per year more than African Americans with the same education.⁶⁴ Even when they had the same family structure as white workers, blacks found themselves more likely to be poor. Yet a wide range of policy makers and pundits have reversed the relationship between cause and effect, identifying the difficulties black families face as the cause rather than the consequence of their impoverishment.

The deindustrialization and economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s imposes continuing racial penalties on wage earners from minority communities, who suffered setbacks while members of other groups accumulated equity-producing assets. Even when some minority groups show improvement, others do not. In 1995, for example, every U.S. ethnic and racial group experienced an increase in income except the twenty-seven million Hispanics, who experienced a 5.1 percent drop in income during that year alone.⁶⁵

Forty-six percent of black workers between the ages of twenty and twenty-four held blue-collar jobs in 1976, but only 20 percent by 1984. Earnings by young black families that had reached 60 percent of white families' income in 1973 fell to 46 percent by 1986. Younger African American families experienced a 50 percent drop in real earnings between 1973 and 1986, with the decline in black male wages particularly steep.⁶⁶ Many popular and scholarly studies have delineated the causes for black economic decline.⁶⁷ Deindustrialization decimated the industrial infrastructure that formerly provided high wage jobs and chances for upward mobility to black workers. Neoconservative attacks on government spending for public housing, health, education,

and transportation deprived members of minority groups of needed services and opportunities for jobs in the public sector. A massive retreat at the highest levels of government from the responsibility to enforce antidiscrimination laws has sanctioned pervasive overt and covert racial discrimination by bankers, realtors, and employers.

Yet public opinion polls of white Americans reflect little recognition of these devastating changes. Seventy percent of whites in one poll said that African Americans “have the same opportunities to live a middle-class life as whites,” and nearly three-fourths of white respondents to a 1989 poll believed that opportunities for blacks had improved under Reagan.⁶⁸ Such optimism about the opportunities available to African Americans demonstrates ignorance of the dire conditions facing black communities, but it also indicates that many whites believe that blacks suffer deservedly, because they do not take advantage of the opportunities offered them. In opinion polls, favorable assessments of black chances for success often accompanied extremely negative judgments about the abilities, work habits, and character of black people. A National Opinion Research Report in 1990 disclosed that more than 50 percent of U.S. whites viewed blacks as innately lazy and less intelligent and less patriotic than whites.⁶⁹ More than 60 percent said that they believed that blacks suffer from poor housing and employment opportunities because of their own lack of willpower. Some 56.3 percent said that blacks preferred welfare to employment, while 44.6 percent contended that blacks tended toward laziness.⁷⁰ Even more important, research by Mary Edsall and Thomas Byrne Edsall indicates that many whites structure nearly all of their decisions about housing, education, and politics in response to their aversions to black people.⁷¹

The present political culture in this country gives broad sanction for viewing white supremacy and antiblack racism as forces from the past, as demons finally put to rest by the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.⁷² Jurists, journalists, and politicians have generally been more vocal in opposing what they call “quotas” and “reverse discrimination”—by which they usually mean race-specific measures, designed to remedy existing racial discrimination, that inconvenience or offend whites—than in challenging the thousands of well-documented cases every year of routine, systematic, and unyielding discrimination against minorities. It is my contention that the stark contrast between nonwhite experiences and white opinions during the past two decades cannot be attributed solely to individual ignorance or intolerance, but stems instead from liberal individualism’s inability to describe adequately the collective dimensions of our experience.⁷³ As long as we define social life as the sum total of conscious and deliberative individual activities, we will be able to discern as racist only *individual* manifestations of personal prejudice and hostility. Systemic, collective, and coordinated group behavior consequently drops out of sight. Collective exercises of power that relentlessly channel rewards, resources, and opportunities from one group to another will not appear “racist” from this perspective, because they rarely announce their intention to discriminate against individuals. Yet they nonetheless give racial identities their sinister social meaning by giving people from different races vastly different life chances.

The gap between white perception and minority experience can have explosive consequences. Little more than a year after the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, a sixteen-year-old high school junior shared her opinions with a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*: “I don’t think white people owe anything to black people,” she explained. “We didn’t sell them into slavery, it was our ancestors. What they did was wrong, but we’ve done our best to make up for it.” A seventeen-year-old senior echoed those comments, telling the reporter, “I feel we spend more time in my history class talking about what whites owe blacks than just about anything else when the issue of slavery comes up. I often received dirty looks. This seems strange given that I wasn’t even alive then. And the few members of my family from that time didn’t have the luxury of owning much, let alone slaves. So why, I ask you, am I constantly made to feel guilty?”⁷⁴

More ominously, after pleading guilty to bombing two homes and one car, vandalizing a synagogue, and attempting to start a race war by planning the murder of beating victim Rodney King and the bombing of Los Angeles’s First African Methodist Episcopal Church, twenty-year-old Christopher David Fisher explained that “sometimes whites were picked on because of the color of their skin. Maybe we’re blamed for slavery.”⁷⁵ Fisher’s actions were certainly extreme, but his justification of them drew knowingly and precisely on a broadly shared narrative about the victimization of “innocent” whites by irrational and ungrateful minorities. This theme appears again and again in discussion about race by young whites, as Karyn McKinney demonstrates brilliantly in her sensitive study of racial discourses among college students.⁷⁶

The belief among young whites that racist things happened in the distant past and that it is unfair to hold contemporary whites accountable for them illuminates broader currents in our culture. These young people associate black grievances solely with slavery, and they express irritation at what they perceive as efforts to make them feel guilty or unduly privileged because of things that they did not do personally. They feel innocent individually and cannot conceive of a collective responsibility for collective wrongs. The claim that one’s own family did not own any slaves is intended to end the discussion. It is almost never followed by proposals to find the white families whose ancestors did own slaves, to track them down and make them pay reparations. The disavowal of responsibility for slavery never acknowledges how the existence of slavery and the exploitation of black labor after emancipation created opportunities which penalized blacks and benefited whites who did not own slaves. Rather, it seems to hold that, because not all white people owned slaves, no white people can be held accountable or inconvenienced by the legacy of slavery. This argument does not address the long histories and contemporary realities of segregation, racialized social policies, urban renewal, or the revived racism of contemporary neoconservatism. On the contrary, as Christopher Fisher recognized in his remarks, articulation of one’s own imagined discomfort with being “picked on” and “blamed” for slavery is the real injury, one that in his mind gave him good reason to bomb homes, deface synagogues, and plot to kill black people.

Unfortunately for our society, these young whites accurately reflect the logic of the language of liberal individualism and its ideological predispositions in discussions of race. In their

apparent ignorance of the disciplined, systemic, and collective *group* activity that has structured white identities in U.S. history, they reflect the dominant views in their society. In a 1979 law journal article, future Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia argued that affirmative action “is based upon concepts of racial indebtedness and racial entitlement rather than individual worth and individual need” and is thus “racist.”⁷⁷ Yet, liberal individualism is not completely color-blind on this issue. As Cheryl I. Harris demonstrates, the legacy of liberal individualism has not prevented the Supreme Court from recognizing and protecting the group interests of *whites* in the Bakke, Croson, and Wygant cases.⁷⁸ In each case, the Court nullified affirmative action programs because they judged efforts to help blacks as harmful to white expectations of entitlement—expectations based on the possessive investment in whiteness they held as members of a group. In the Bakke case, for instance, where the plaintiff argued that medical school affirmative action programs disadvantaged white applicants like himself, neither Bakke nor the Court contested the legitimacy of medical school admissions standards that reserved five seats in each class for children of wealthy donors to the university or that penalized Bakke for being older than most of the other applicants. The group rights of not-wealthy people or of people older than their classmates did not compel the Court or Bakke to make any claim of harm. But they did challenge and reject a policy designed to offset the effects of past and present discrimination when they could construe the medical school admission policies as detrimental to the interests of whites as a group—and as a consequence they applied the “strict scrutiny” standard to protect whites while denying that protection to people of color. In this case, as in so many others, the language of liberal individualism serves as a cover for coordinated collective group interests.

Group interests are not monolithic, and aggregate figures can obscure serious differences within racial groups. All whites do not benefit from the possessive investment in whiteness in precisely the same ways; the experiences of members of minority groups are not interchangeable. But the possessive investment in whiteness always affects individual and collective life chances and opportunities. Even in cases where minority groups secure political and economic power through collective mobilization, the terms and conditions of their collectivity and the logic of group solidarity are always influenced and intensified by the absolute value of whiteness in U.S. politics, economics, and culture.⁷⁹

In the 1960s, members of the Black Panther Party used to say that “if you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.” But those of us who are “white” can only become part of the solution if we recognize the degree to which we are already part of the problem—not because of our race, but because of our possessive investment in it. Neither conservative “free market” policies nor liberal social welfare policies can solve the “white problem” in the United States, because both reinforce the possessive investment in whiteness. An explicitly antiracist interethnic movement, however—one that acknowledges the existence and power of whiteness might make some important changes. Antiracist coalitions also have a long history in the United States—in the political activism of John Brown, Sojourner Truth, and the Magon brothers among others, but also in our rich cultural tradition of interethnic antiracism connected to civil rights activism of the kind detailed so brilliantly in rhythm and blues musician Johnny Otis’s book,

Upside Your Head! Rhythm and Blues on Central Avenue. The all too infrequent, but nonetheless important, efforts by whites to fight racism, not out of sympathy for someone else but out of a sense of self-respect and simple justice, have never completely disappeared; they remain available as models for the present.⁸⁰

Walter Benjamin's praise for "presence of mind" came from his understanding of how difficult it can be to see the present in all of its rich complexity. But more important, he called for presence of mind as the means for implementing what he named "the only true telepathic miracle"—turning the forbidding future into the fulfilled present.⁸¹ Failure to acknowledge our society's possessive investment in whiteness prevents us from facing the present openly and honestly. It hides from us the devastating costs of disinvestment in America's infrastructure over the past two decades and keeps us from facing our responsibility to reinvest in human resources by channeling resources toward education, health, and housing—and away from subsidies for speculation and luxury. After two decades of disinvestment, the only further disinvestment we need is from the ruinous pathology of whiteness. The possessive investment in whiteness undermines our best instincts and interests. In a society suffering so badly from an absence of mutuality, an absence of responsibility, and an absence of justice, presence of mind might be just what we need.

Notes

The epigraph is from Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work*, 1.

- 1 Raphael Tardon, "Richard Wright Tells Us: The White Problem in the United States," *Action*, October 24, 1946. Reprinted in Kenneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre, *Conversations with Richard Wright* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 99. Malcolm X and others used this same formulation in the 1960s, but I believe that it originated with Wright, or at least that is the earliest citation I have found.
- 2 Toni Morrison points out the ways in which African Americans play an essential role in the white imagination, how their representations both hide and reveal the terms of white supremacy upon which the nation was founded and has been sustained ever since. See *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness in the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
- 3 Richard Dyer, "White," *Screen* 29, 4 (fall 1998): 44.
- 4 I thank Michael Schudson for pointing out to me that since the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s whiteness dares not speak its name, cannot speak in its own behalf, but rather advances through a color-blind language radically at odds with the distinctly racialized distribution of resources and life chances in U.S. society.
- 5 Walter Benjamin, "Madame Ariane: Second Courtyard on the Left," in *One-Way Street* (London: New Left Books, 1969), 98–99.

- 6 See Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 11–16; Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974); Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), 177–183.
- 7 Nash, *Red, White, and Black*, 292–293.
- 8 For the imposition of slave owning on Native Americans see Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 35–36. Howard R. Lamar, *Texas Crossings: The Lone Star State and the American Far West, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), xiii.
- 9 Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Movements in America* (New York and London: Routledge, 1977), 44. See also chapter 9, “Frantic to Join.”
- 10 Nash, *Red, White, and Black*, 294.
- 11 Robinson, *Black Movements in America*, 43–44.
- 12 Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 187–188; Peter Narvaez, “The Influences of Hispanic Music Cultures on Afro-American Blues Music,” *Black Music Research Journal* 14, 2 (fall 1994): 206; Ernest V. Allen, “When Japan Was Champion of the Darker Races”; Satokata Takahishi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism,” *Black Scholar* 24, 1: 27–31.
- 13 See Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), and Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- 14 I thank Phil Ethington for pointing out to me that these aspects of New Deal policies emerged out of political negotiations between the segregationist Dixiecrats and liberals from the North and West. My perspective is that white supremacy was not a gnawing aberration within the New Deal coalition but rather an essential point of unity between southern whites and northern white ethnics.
- 15 Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board of the Home Owners Loan Corporation, City Survey File, Los Angeles, 1939, Neighborhood D-53, National Archives, Box 74, RG 195.
- 16 Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, 54.
- 17 John R. Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 182.
- 18 Ibid., 114. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 20.
- 19 Arlene Zarembka, *The Urban Housing Crisis: Social, Economic, and Legal Issues and Proposals* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1990), 104.

- 20 Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 91, 92.
- 21 Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 130.
- 22 See Gary Gerstle, "Working-Class Racism: Broaden the Focus," *International Labor and Working Class History* 44 (fall 1993): 36.
- 23 Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 168–169.
- 24 Troy Duster, "Crime, Youth Unemployment, and the Underclass," *Crime and Delinquency* 33, 2 (April 1987): 308, 309.
- 25 Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, 55.
- 26 Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 105, 113; Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, 204–205.
- 27 Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, 113.
- 28 Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Justice for All," in *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*, ed. Robert Bullard (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1994), 9–10.
- 29 Robert D. Bullard, "Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement," in *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grass Roots*, ed. Robert D. Bullard (Boston: South End, 1993), 21.
- 30 Bullard, "Environmental Justice for All," 13.
- 31 Charles Lee, "Beyond Toxic Wastes and Race," in *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grass Roots*, ed. Robert D. Bullard (Boston: South End, 1993), 49. Two corporate-sponsored research institutes challenged claims of racial bias in the location and operation of toxic and hazardous waste systems. Andy B. Anderson, Douglas L. Anderton, and John Michael Oakes made the corporate case in "Environmental Equity: Evaluating TSDF Siting over the Past Two Decades," *Waste Age*, July 1994. These results were trumpeted in a report by the Washington University Center for the Study of American Business, funded by the John M. Olin Foundation. But the study by Anderson, Anderton, and Oakes was sponsored by the Institute of Chemical Waste Management, an industry trade group. The researchers claimed that their results were not influenced by corporate sponsorship, but they limited their inquiry to urban areas with toxic storage, disposal, and treatment facilities, conveniently excluding seventy facilities, 15 percent of TSDFs, and 20 percent of the population. The world's largest waste company, WMX Company, contributed \$250,000 to the study, and the study's research plan excluded from scrutiny two landfills owned by WMX: the nation's largest commercial landfill, located in the predominately African American city of Emelle, Alabama, and the nation's fifth largest landfill, in Kettelman City Hills, California, a predominately Latino community.
- 32 Bunyan Bryant and Paul Mohai, *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992).

- 33 Lee, "Beyond Toxic Wastes and Race," 48.
- 34 Robert D. Bullard, "Decision Making," in Laura Westra and Peter S. Wenz, eds., *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), 4.
- 35 Bullard, "Anatomy of Environmental Racism," 21.
- 36 David L. L. Shields, "What Color is Hunger?" in David L. L. Shields, ed., *The Color of Hunger: Race and Hunger in National and International Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 4.
- 37 Centers for Disease Control, "Nutritional Status of Minority Children: United States, 1986," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports (MMWR)* 36, 23 (June, 19, 1987): 366–369.
- 38 Mitchell Landsberg, "Wide Ethnic Disparities Found in County," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 2000, B7. Peter S. Wenz, "Just Garbage," in Laura Westra and Peter S. Wenz, eds., *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 66; Robert D. Bullard, "Decision Making," in Laura Westra and Peter S., Wenz, eds., *Faces of Environmental Racism*, 8.
- 39 "Air Salta: Taking a Stand for Clean Air through Community Organizing," *Toxinformer* v.19 n.2 (April) 2000, 5; "Environmental Racism," *Toxinformer* v.19 n.1 (January) 2000, 5; Laura Pulido, "Multiracial Organizing among Environmental Justice Activists in Los Angeles," in Michael J. Dear, H. Eric Shockman, and Greg Hise, eds., *Rethinking Los Angeles* (Thousand Oaks, CA, London, New Delhi: Sage, 1996): 175.
- 40 Charles Trueheart, "The Bias Most Deadly," *Washington Post*, October 30, 1990, sec. 7, cited in Shields, *The Color of Hunger*, 3.
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far less able than other middle-class groups to translate advances in income into advances in wealth and power. Similarly, the success of neoconservatism since the 1970s has rested on securing support from white workers for economic policies that do them objective harm by mobilizing countersubversive electoral coalitions against busing and affirmative action, while carrying out attacks on public institutions and resources by representing “public” space as black space. See Oliver and Shapiro, “Wealth of a Nation.” See also Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*.

80 Johnny Otis, *Upside Your Head! Rhythm and Blues on Central Avenue* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan/University Press of New England, 1993). Mobilizations against plant shutdowns, for environmental protection, against cutbacks in education spending, and for reproductive rights all contain the potential for panethnic antiracist organizing, but too often neglect of race as a central modality for how issues of employment, pollution, education, or reproductive rights are experienced isolates these social movements from their broadest possible base.

81 Benjamin, “Madame Ariane,” 98, 99.

Constructing Ethnic Identities, Constructing Differences

Jonathan Y. Okamura

This chapter is concerned with the construction and continuing persistence of ethnic identity among groups in Hawai'i, despite the assimilation that has obviously occurred since immigrants began arriving in the early nineteenth century. The shared identity of an ethnic group is perhaps its most enduring feature, long after it has lost its "traditional" culture of language, religion, beliefs, and values and has acquired the dominant culture of the society. Nonetheless, ethnic identities are always subject to change in their meaning and significance since they are not permanent or natural, but instead variable and contingent. What it means to be Japanese American or Portuguese American in the early twenty-first century can hardly be the same as it was in the late nineteenth century when Japanese and Portuguese began immigrating to Hawai'i. The importance of their ethnic identity to Japanese Americans and Portuguese Americans has also changed, if not declined, over the generations since it does not organize their daily life and collective actions as it did prior to World War II. The same holds true for other ethnic groups in Hawai'i that have all experienced substantial transformations in the significance, meaning, and expression of their respective ethnic identities. Furthermore, these groups have changed their ethnic identities themselves, often in response to varying political and economic conditions they have encountered in different historical periods.

In discussing and analyzing ethnic identity in Hawai'i, I apply the constructionist approach that contends ethnic and racial groups construct or create particular identities by and for themselves under given historical circumstances (Cerulo 1997: 389–390; Cornell and Hartmann 1998: 72–73; Nagel 1994). While different explanations have been offered as to why ethnic and racial groups engage in identity

Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Constructing Ethnic Identities, Constructing Differences," *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai'i*, pp. 91–124, 208–209, 215–227. Copyright © 2008 by Temple University Press. Reprinted with permission.

formation, including “happenstance” and “inertia” (Cornell and Hartmann 1998: 99–100) and boundary construction (Nagel 1994: 154), I contend that they do so in order to advance their political or economic interests in competition over valued resources. From this perspective, ethnic or racial identity construction is viewed as a possible strategy a group can use to foster its collective concerns in society when competing with other ethnic and racial groups with comparable goals. Their constructed identity can serve as a means for ethnic and racial groups to mobilize and organize their members in pursuit of common claims and objectives. In this regard, sociologist Karen A. Cerulo (1997: 393) has introduced the concept of “collective agency,” which “includes a conscious sense of group as agent” insofar as “[i]dentities emerge and movements ensue because collectives consciously coordinate action; group members consciously develop offenses and defenses, consciously insulate, differentiate, and ... cooperate and compete” with other groups.

While it might be argued that the group’s interests—whether political, economic, or other—should be sufficient themselves for its members to be willing to join in a collective effort to advance them, a shared ethnic or racial identity can underscore how these concerns are specific to the group or are being challenged by other ethnic and racial groups or the state. Cornell and Hartmann (1998: 96) emphasize the “power” of racial or ethnic identity as an organizational basis for collective agency, solidarity, and action: “When it is advantageous to draw a boundary between one set of claimants to opportunities or resources and another, ethnicity and race lend themselves admirably to the task. When there is a need to mobilize persons on behalf of their interests, the invocation of ethnic or racial bonds can be a powerful call to unity.”

Even the name that is created or chosen by an ethnic or racial group is a significant aspect of its constructed identity since its meaning or symbolism can serve to mobilize and unite its members. Such a newly created or reconstructed ethnic or racial identity can raise the individual and collective consciousness of group members regarding their shared historical experiences and contemporary status in society and the social and cultural ties that bind them to one another and separate them from others. This increased awareness may result in greater numbers of ethnic or racial group members claiming and asserting their new identity and thereby being more willing to support collective efforts to pursue their political or economic claims or interests, including challenging their unequal status in society.

This activating process is evident in the construction of “Asian American” identity by students and community activists beginning in the late 1960s (Espiritu 1992), which resulted in Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Filipino Americans, and other Asians in the continental United States expressing this new racial identity for themselves and the ethnic groups they represented.¹ This new identity then became the organizational basis for advancing the collective concerns of Asian Americans during that tumultuous period, such as opposing the Vietnam War as a racist war, gaining political and economic control over their ethnic communities, and challenging racist stereotypes and other degrading representations of Asians in the United States, for example, as “Orientals.” The specific term “Asian” was selected to denote not merely the countries

in Asia from where they or their ancestors had immigrated but, more importantly, the common political, economic, and social ties and experiences that Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, and other Asian groups had with each other in the United States. The term “American” was included to emphasize that Asian Americans are indeed American by citizenship or permanent residence, rather than aliens or “perpetual foreigners” as was the widespread misperception, and therefore entitled to the same legal rights and benefits as other Americans.

Identity construction is certainly not the only means engaged in by ethnic and racial groups to further their interests and claims. Other possible collective strategies include political organizing and participating in electoral politics, forming community-based organizations to seek political access or power outside of the electoral arena, or filing lawsuits to have group problems and concerns addressed by the state. Nonetheless, ethnic identity formation can still support these other strategies; for example, a community organization based on ethnic ties can mobilize its members in support of a candidate for political office or in support or opposition to a legal or political issue that directly affects the members of an ethnic group.

Not all ethnic groups engage in identity construction since some groups are politically and economically established such that they have other means or resources to maintain their dominant status in society. These resources include political and economic power or, at the family level, sufficient wealth that can be transferred from parents to children. In contrast, other less-advantaged ethnic groups are prevented from using identity construction to advance their interests because of the political and economic circumstances that confront them. Such conditions include the lesser political power or subordinate economic status of an ethnic group that may result in structural constraints on construction of its ethnic identity. Cultural representations of an ethnic group in the form of stigmatized stereotypes also constitute societal circumstances that can restrict identity formation.

In *Ethnicity without Groups* (2004), sociologist Rogers Brubaker provides a critique of “constructivist” approaches to ethnic identity by questioning if ethnic groups necessarily have identities and if, indeed, they all constitute groups. He contends that (2004: 55):

even constructivist thinking on identity takes the existence of identity as axiomatic. Identity is always already “there,” as something that individuals and groups “have,” even if the content of particular identities, and the boundaries that mark groups off from one another, are conceptualized as always in flux. Even constructivist language tends therefore to objectify “identity,” to treat it as a “thing,” albeit a malleable one, that people “have,” “forge,” and “construct.”

In contrast to such “constructivist thinking,” my position is that, while ethnic and racial groups have identities, if only because they have been assigned to them, not all groups can or seek to “forge” and “construct” identities for themselves. By analyzing Japanese Americans and Filipino

Americans as examples of ethnic groups in Hawai'i that do not actively engage in identity construction to the same extent as Native Hawaiians and Korean Americans, I believe my approach to identity formation does not contradict Brubaker's.

Lest I be accused of advocating a rational choice approach to ethnic identity construction, my position is that ethnic and racial groups, and certainly not individuals, are not free to create any identity of their own choosing for themselves and, in fact, can be severely limited by the ethnic or racial identities ascribed to them by other groups through denigrating stereotypes. In his critique of rational choice theory as applied to race and ethnic relations by Michael Banton (1980), M. G. Smith (1985: 486) argued that: "It is therefore quite illusory to formulate a general theory of R&ER [race and ethnic relations] as if they are always and everywhere freely created by the rational choice of all parties involved." He emphasized that such choice is often constrained: "Yet if it is assumed that by nature everyone seeks to optimise his or her net advantages, it is essential to recognise the prevalence, bases, variety, aims and conditions of coercion which together ensure that ... individuals will enjoy ... radically different freedoms of choice and action" (496). In concluding his critique, Smith (497) asked: "[C]an advocates of RCT [rational choice theory] applied to R&ER explain within the terms and limits of their theory how and why is it that whites have generally enjoyed such superior freedom of choice and opportunities to maximize their individual net advantage, collectively or otherwise, in interracial situations than people of other stocks?"²

Nonetheless, it is possible for ethnic and racial groups to seek collectively to change the societal circumstances in which they are situated. They thus can create more favorable social conditions for themselves in which their asserted identity and claims are more likely to be accepted by other ethnic and racial groups in society. Identity construction is therefore an ongoing social and cultural process because both ethnic and racial groups and the political and economic circumstances that surround them are subject to change by the actions of the groups themselves. In this regard, Cornell and Hartmann (1998: 95) attribute much greater transformative and independent power than is warranted to ethnic and racial identities, rather than ethnic and racial groups. They maintain that "identities are capable—via the actions they set in motion—of reconstructing circumstances. Ethnic identity, in other words, is not only a product of circumstantial factors (among other things). At times, it produces circumstances of its own." Ultimately, the groups that create racial or ethnic identities, rather than those identities themselves, set collective actions in motion that can transform political and economic conditions to the advantage of the racial or ethnic groups concerned.

Ethnic identity construction can be seen as having cultural and structural dimensions. The cultural dimension of identity formation pertains to the selective use by an ethnic group of certain aspects of its culture—values, customs, myths, traditions, language, or religion—to create and articulate a distinct identity for itself. This cultural dimension also includes the specific meanings attributed to the group's ethnic identity, such as how it views itself as a constituent group in society, for example, as "hardworking," "family-oriented," or "traditional." By providing

a cultural repertoire of resources, culture furnishes a creative element that facilitates the process of constructing an ethnic or racial group's identity and the shared meanings and symbols attached to it. As observed by Nagel (1994: 162): "Culture provides the content and meaning of ethnicity; it animates and authenticates ethnic boundaries by providing a history, ideology, symbolic universe, and system of meaning. Culture answers the question: What are we?" Like ethnic identity, culture also can be reconstructed and transformed by its adherents, and this attribute enhances its utility in identity formation. Under given historical circumstances, an ethnic group may reconstruct certain aspects of its culture—such as traditions, myths, or values—in order to assert a particular identity for itself or to ascribe a particular meaning to its ethnic identity. Alba (1990: 77) has emphasized the interdependent relation between ethnic identity and culture: "Thus, the relationship between identity and cultural activities can be seen as synergistic—each necessary for the other to contribute positively to ethnicity as a social form; that is, ethnic identity without any cultural content represents a pure form of symbolic ethnicity, and an adherence to ethnic culture in the absence of ethnic identity represents a private form of ethnicity that does not feed into the ongoing life of an ethnic community." Ethnic identity and culture thus require each other in order to be constituted as cultural representations articulated for the collective benefit of an ethnic group.

Besides ethnic identity construction, cultural construction also can serve as a mechanism for ethnic mobilization, particularly in ethnic social movements. Nagel (1994: 165) observes how "Cultural claims, icons, and imagery are used by activists in the mobilization process; cultural symbols and meanings are also produced and transformed as ethnic movements emerge and grow." She notes how such cultural symbols and themes are "borrowed and sometimes repackaged" to advance movement objectives (166). The Hawaiian sovereignty movement (discussed below) provides an example of how cultural values, rituals, and symbols are used strategically to mobilize the community in pursuit of the movement's goals of self-determination and recognition of the rights of Native Hawaiians as the indigenous people of Hawai'i.

On the other hand, the structural dimension of ethnic identity construction concerns a group's relations with other groups in a common society. In this case, identity construction centers on boundary making and maintenance insofar as the group seeks to create a social division or at least a distinction between itself and other ethnic groups. In establishing this boundary, an ethnic group may focus on certain cultural criteria—particularly those significant for constructing its identity—that distinguish its members from nonmembers. Due to acculturation processes and the consequent loss of cultural distinctiveness, an ethnic group can also emphasize common descent or ancestry (real or fictive) among its members as the primary factor in constructing its ethnic boundary vis-à-vis other groups. As Nagel (1994: 162) contends: "Ethnic boundaries function to determine identity options, membership composition and size, and form of ethnic organization. Boundaries answer the question: Who are we?" Conversely, since they establish membership criteria, ethnic boundaries also answer the question: Who are not us? The boundary then can be used by an ethnic group to protect its political and economic resources—such as

political rights or land—from nonmembers who seek access to these resources by claiming to belong to the group. The ethnic boundary also can serve as the basis for organizing group members to pursue or protect their shared interests.

Another related aspect of the structural dimension of ethnic identity formation concerns a group's perceived status in relation to other ethnic groups in society. This view of themselves in terms of their relative political or economic power or status is a significant aspect of a group's ethnic identity that also provides certain meanings for their identity that are quite distinct from those that are culture-based. These structure-based meanings might include the perception of an ethnic group that it is "oppressed," "successful," or "poor" in comparison to other groups. Whether the cultural or structural dimension (or both) is emphasized by an ethnic group, identity construction can be understood as primarily about creating and articulating social and cultural differences with other ethnic groups as the primary basis for the expression and maintenance of group distinctiveness toward advancing group-specific rights and claims. As Asian American literature professor Kandice Chuh (2003: 47) maintains: "Thinking deconstructively, we can understand that identity is contingent upon difference, that difference precedes and constitutes identity." In contrast, sameness, or the absence of difference, is not very likely to contribute to the attainment of the particular interests or claims of an ethnic group if it cannot distinguish itself from other comparable groups with concerns of their own. Ethnic identity signifies social and cultural difference among ethnic groups holding unequal status in society and thus can serve as the organizational basis for a group to foster its specific interests, such as advancing its political and economic status. Ethnic identity formation thus provides a means for aggrieved ethnic groups to disentangle the intersection of ethnic identity and social structure that maintains their subordination in society.

The emphasis on ethnic identity construction may lead to the false understanding that an ethnic group has only one identity and one culture. For most ethnic groups, the reality is social and cultural diversity and variability within groups whose members may express different ethnic identities and follow somewhat disparate cultures. These differences in ethnic identity and culture may be based on citizenship, class, generation, or gender within a group. Among Asian Americans and Latinos, a primary contributing factor in such internal diversity is ongoing post-1965 immigration that has resulted in a major division between the American-born and immigrant sectors within both racial groups and within specific ethnic groups such as Filipino Americans and Mexican Americans. While Hawai'i born and Philippine born Filipino Americans belong to the same ethnic group in Hawai'i, they affirm distinct identities, practice different cultures, and speak different languages at home. Thus, ethnic or racial identity construction tends to obscure or neglect such cultural and social differentiation in the effort to create and advance particular meanings for the common identity of an ethnic or racial group and therefore can be considered a form of "strategic essentialism" (see Lowe 1991).

By applying the constructionist approach, I discuss why and how some ethnic groups in Hawai'i are actively engaged in structural and cultural processes of identity construction.

These groups include Native Hawaiians, Korean Americans, particularly the “1.5” generation, and locals. These groups occupy differing political and economic positions in Hawai‘i society and thus have different resources and strategies available to them in using identity formation as a means to advance their collective concerns and interests. They also encounter and have experienced different economic, political, and historical conditions in Hawai‘i and hence have responded in different ways at different times. [...] I review Japanese Americans as an example of an ethnic group that does not have to employ identity construction because of their already dominant political and socioeconomic status in Hawai‘i. I also discuss how and why Okinawan Americans or *Uchinanchu* differentiate themselves from Japanese Americans through identity formation processes. [...] Filipino Americans [are] an example of an ethnic group that has been precluded from constructing its own ethnic identity by the constraining societal conditions with which they must contend, especially their historical and contemporary racist stereotyping by other groups. Through description and analysis of ethnic identity construction, this and the following two chapters demonstrate the significance of ethnicity as a cultural representation that signifies social and cultural difference among ethnic groups. I also show that ethnic identity formation serves as a means for some groups to contest political and economic inequality in Hawai‘i.

Native Hawaiians: *Kanaka Maoli* Identity

Of the three groups discussed in this chapter, Native Hawaiians provide the most significant example of strategically employing identity construction to advance political and economic interests and objectives.³ It is not coincidental that since the emergence in the 1970s of the sovereignty movement that seeks self-determination for Native Hawaiians, they have constructed and asserted a collective identity for themselves as the indigenous people of Hawai‘i. This political identity and status foster the attainment of their major goals of greater political and economic power and formal recognition of their rights and entitlements as the native people of Hawai‘i, including sovereignty. In pursuing these collective political and economic objectives, Native Hawaiians differentiate themselves socially and culturally from all the other groups in the islands that, as they point out, arrived as immigrants and thus do not have the ancestral ties to Hawai‘i that Native Hawaiians can claim. As Native Hawaiian scholar and sovereignty leader Haunani-Kay Trask (2000: 1) asserts: “As the indigenous people of Hawai‘i, Hawaiians are Native to the Hawaiian Islands. We do not descend from the Americas or from Asia but from the great Pacific Ocean where our ancestors navigated to, and from, every archipelago. ... The lesson of our origins is that we are genealogically related to Hawai‘i, our islands, as family.” Being the indigenous people of the islands, Native Hawaiians emphasize that they are not just another ethnic group or minority, like Chinese Americans or Korean Americans, but have a very different legal and political status in Hawai‘i since they are not immigrants to the state. Instead, they are

a native people whose homeland was colonized by the United States with the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, and thus they have a legal and political relationship to the United States recognized by Congress in numerous acts that ethnic groups in Hawai'i lack.

The Native Hawaiian case brings out the significance of both the cultural and structural dimensions of identity construction. In terms of the cultural dimension, Native Hawaiians employ particular aspects of their traditional (precontact) culture—such as language, religion, and values—to articulate their social and cultural distinctiveness from other island groups.⁴ This is evident in the Hawaiian term *kanaka maoli*, literally “real or true people,” that they use to express their collective identity as the indigenous people of Hawai'i.⁵ Using a term from their own language instead of English is a powerful symbol that underscores the cultural uniqueness of Native Hawaiians compared to ethnic groups in Hawai'i that simply refer to themselves as Caucasian, Chinese, or Japanese that is indicative of their desired assimilation into American culture and society. But as Trask (2000: 6, emphasis in original) reiterates: “Hawaiians are not engaged in identity politics. ... *The struggle is not for a personal or group identity but for land, government, and international status as a recognized nation.*” As I have maintained, identity construction is a means toward an end, including economic and political objectives, rather than an end in itself.

Besides the cultural and political significance of the term *kanaka maoli*, Native Hawaiians have chosen it to represent their identity because an increasing number of non-Hawaiians claim they are “Hawaiian” due to their birth or long-term residence in Hawai'i. They thus equate being Hawaiian with being a Texan or a New Yorker, instead of understanding or acknowledging that Hawaiians are not merely residents of a state but a native people with a distinct culture, history, religion, language, and ancestral ties to Hawai'i. While some non-Hawaiians may not hesitate in referring to themselves as “Hawaiian,” they are far less likely to claim being *kanaka maoli*. Already in the 1980s, sovereignty leader and then professor of medicine Kekuni Blaisdell (1989: 11, emphasis in original) remarked on this disturbing trend among non-Hawaiians:

Accentuating the pain of every Native Hawaiian is the increasing use, and therefore misuse and abuse, of the term “Hawaiian” to refer to what is clearly *not* Hawaiian and sometimes even anti-Hawaiian. To *kanaka maoli*, the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Hawaiian Airlines, ... and non-Hawaiian residents of Hawai'i are not Hawaiian. ... [I]f non-Hawaiians are Hawaiian, then who or what are Hawaiians? ... This failure of non-Hawaiians to respect the distinctive identity of Hawaiians as *the* aboriginal people of Hawai'i in Hawai'i with special rights is humiliating.

The emphasis on traditional culture, such as language, in the construction and expression of Native Hawaiian identity can be attributed to several factors. One basic reason is that they were prohibited from practicing various highly significant aspects of their culture, such as language, religion, and dance, following Western contact; thus, the great interest in these cultural traditions

is an effort to retrieve what was forcibly taken away from them. The much greater concern to maintain and practice their traditional culture clearly differentiates Native Hawaiians from most ethnic groups in Hawai'i that have become largely acculturated over the generations to American culture. Certainly for Native Hawaiians, practicing certain aspects of their traditional culture contributes to the articulation of their unique identity as the indigenous people of Hawai'i. This is the primary reason that symbols of Hawaiian traditional culture, including language, religion, dance, and dress, are prominently featured in their political demonstrations (see below) because they represent the self-determination that Native Hawaiians had before the arrival of Europeans and Americans. However, it must be understood that their political movements are not concerned with a nostalgic return to a romanticized past but instead are very much focused on gaining greater power and control over their collective lives and lands in the present and immediate future.

As for culture-based meanings of being Native Hawaiian, there can be no doubt that construction of their identity as the indigenous people of Hawai'i and the sovereignty movement have resulted in much greater pride and consciousness in being Hawaiian. Until the 1970s, feelings of inferiority and inadequacy were common among Native Hawaiians, including youth, because of the widespread denigrating stereotypes of them as dumb, lazy, violent, and criminally inclined (Kanahele 1982: 22–23). However, during that decade, the emergence of the Hawaiian “cultural renaissance” resulted in a revitalization of their values, customs, and beliefs in traditional dance, music, language, religion, sports, medicine, and arts and crafts (25–27). Writing on “The New Hawaiians” in the early 1980s, historian George Kanahele (25) astutely observed: “Among Hawaiians there is a new kind of awareness about themselves and their problems. ... [W]hat is happening is part of the quest for a higher sense of communal pride and renewed sense of identity as Hawaiians.” The Hawaiian cultural renaissance and the sovereignty movement have led Native Hawaiians to contest their racist stereotyping and advance their political goals by reclaiming and redefining their identity with new positive meanings. A primary source of cultural meanings of Hawaiian identity are traditional values—such as *aloha 'aina* (love for the land)—that underscore their ancestral relationship to the land and other natural resources of Hawai'i (Trask 1984: 125). Similarly, in advancing a “definition of [American Indian] tribal identity,” Native American studies scholar Eva Marie Garrouette (2003: 118, 135) contends that it is “founded on traditional notions of kinship,” particularly the “traditional value of reciprocity” in relating to others and on “relationship to ancestry” or common ties of descent.⁶

With regard to the structural dimension of identity construction, Native Hawaiians seek to affirm and maintain the boundary between themselves as the native people and other groups by emphasizing their ancestral origins in Hawai'i that those other groups lack. In fact, the Hawai'i Constitution formally defines a Native Hawaiian as a person who can trace descent to the people who were living in Hawai'i prior to 1778 when European contact occurred. Compared to sociological definitions of an ethnic group that focus on a shared culture as one of its most distinctive features, the state definition of a Native Hawaiian is very realistic in not requiring

knowledge or practice of Hawaiian culture since much of it was lost with their forced acculturation following contact. This does not mean that Native Hawaiians do not have a culture, only that the state does not require an individual to demonstrate any aspects of that culture to be legally considered a Native Hawaiian.⁷ Questioning the relevance of cultural definitions of American Indian identity, Garrouette (2003: 80) argues: “Can we ... enforce identity definitions that inevitably exclude precisely those who have already suffered the greatest degree of cultural loss and its profound consequences?” However as I discuss below, the state definition of a Native Hawaiian has in effect been legally challenged by non-Hawaiians desiring rights and resources designated only for Native Hawaiians.

While there certainly are different meanings of being Native Hawaiian, structure-based meanings pertain to their perceived political and economic power and status in relation to other groups in Hawai‘i. One such meaning for some Native Hawaiians is that they are a colonized people in their own homeland and thus “politically subordinated” (Trask 2000: 2–3). For some of those who consider Native Hawaiians to be colonial subjects of the United States, being Native Hawaiian means not being American. Other Native Hawaiians might view themselves more generally as a politically and socioeconomically oppressed group in Hawai‘i compared to other groups evident in their poor health status, low educational and occupational attainment, and high proportion of welfare recipients, homeless, and incarcerated (see Okamura 1998c; “Special Report,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 1993: A6). The different meanings of being Native Hawaiian are important in underlining that, like ethnic groups in Hawai‘i and elsewhere, Native Hawaiians articulate diverse collective identities with different meanings and have varying political and economic concerns depending on their class, age, and other social characteristics.

Even before the emergence of the sovereignty movement in the 1970s, Native Hawaiians were successful through their community organizing and political protests in changing to some extent the political and economic circumstances they faced in Hawai‘i. These changes were evident in a constitutional amendment approved by a majority of Hawai‘i voters in 1978 for the establishment of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as a state government agency led by elected Native Hawaiian trustees that would provide programs and services only to Native Hawaiians. Another constitutional amendment that was adopted in 1978 made Hawaiian one of the official languages of the state of Hawai‘i. In addition, the sovereignty movement has made the people of Hawai‘i more aware of the historical injustices and abuses and contemporary subjugation and marginalization of Native Hawaiians and more accepting of the notion that, as the indigenous people of the islands, they have unique rights and claims and are not just another ethnic group among the many others.

However, the *Rice v. Cayetano* (then governor of Hawai‘i) decision of the U.S. Supreme Court issued on February 23, 2000 constitutes a major change, if not setback, in the legal and political circumstances that Native Hawaiians must contend with in seeking their political and economic objectives. The Court’s decision gave non-Hawaiians the same right as Native Hawaiians to vote in elections for trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). Prior to the *Rice* decision,

only Native Hawaiians could be elected as trustees of the agency, but it also led to the loss of that right. The Supreme Court ruling resulted from a suit filed by Harold “Freddy” Rice, a White missionary descendant and wealthy Hawai‘i Island rancher, who challenged the state’s restriction on voting in OHA elections only to Native Hawaiians as racially discriminatory. The *Rice* decision has ushered in what I have referred to as the “Post-Rice” era of ethnic relations in Hawai‘i that has been distinguished by increasing legal challenges to Native Hawaiian rights and entitlements by non-Hawaiians who seek to have the same rights and benefits previously granted by federal and state law only to Native Hawaiians (Okamura 2002: 135). As a result, construction and articulation of *kanaka maoli* identity has come to serve more as a means to protect and maintain, rather than advance and obtain, their rights and claims from lawsuits. Based particularly on common ancestry, Native Hawaiian boundary making has been employed to prevent non-Hawaiians from accessing their entitlements and resources by excluding them from being considered group members.

However, since the *Rice* decision, non-Hawaiians seeking admission to the Kamehameha Schools, a private prekindergarten through twelfth grade educational institution, have been successful by advancing other group membership criteria by which they claim the same rights as Native Hawaiians.⁸ Established in 1884 by the will of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the schools are a \$6 billion nonprofit, charitable trust that annually educates about five thousand Native Hawaiian students on campuses on the three major islands. These students are admitted according to Kamehameha’s policy that gives “preference” to Native Hawaiians. However, in a case settled in 2003, a non-Hawaiian, twelve-year-old boy, Brayden Mohica-Cummings, was accepted to the Kamehameha Schools even though his non-Hawaiian mother had falsely claimed in his application that he was Hawaiian. After the schools rescinded his acceptance, he filed suit through his Sacramento, California-based attorney, Eric Grant, contending Kamehameha’s admissions policy violated federal antidiscrimination laws, although the schools do not receive any federal funds (Daysog 2003c). The reason that many non-Hawaiians want their children to attend the Kamehameha Schools is because of the excellent college preparatory education provided that is comparable to that offered at the more academically prestigious private schools in Hawai‘i but at a much lower cost of about \$3,200 per year (2006–2007).

As for claiming to be Hawaiian, the boy’s mother, Kalena Santos, said she had been adopted by a Native Hawaiian father and therefore was raised as a Hawaiian; she asserted that her son was similarly Hawaiian because she had raised him. Thus, contrary to the state definition of a Native Hawaiian based on descent rather than culture, Santos advanced a cultural definition of being Hawaiian. After a U.S. District Court judge ordered the Kamehameha Schools to admit Mohica-Cummings pending a decision in his lawsuit, the schools’ Board of Trustees, in a controversial decision, voted to admit him and allow him to attend Kamehameha through the twelfth grade on the condition that he drop his suit (Daysog 2003c). Their concern was probably that if he prevailed in court, the schools would have to revise their admissions policy drastically not to give preference to Native Hawaiian applicants.⁹ Strong Native Hawaiian opposition to the

Mohica-Cummings lawsuit and the boy's acceptance by the trustees was evident in the more than 84,000 signatures collected by the Na Pua Ke Alii Pauahi (The Children of Princess Pauahi) organization (Daysog 2003b).

In 2007 the Kamehameha Schools reached an out-of-court settlement in the *John Doe* lawsuit against them that an anonymous non-Hawaiian student had filed four years earlier. He challenged the schools' admissions policy as racially discriminatory after he had twice been denied acceptance because he has no Hawaiian ancestry. John Doe's suit was filed on his behalf by John Goemans, the lawyer for Freddy Rice in his suit against OHA, and by constitutional law attorney Eric Grant, the lawyer for Brayden Mohica-Cummings in his lawsuit against the schools. In a 2003 ruling in the suit, a U.S. District Court judge in Hawai'i found that Kamehameha's admissions policy "serves a legitimate remedial purpose by addressing the socioeconomic and educational disadvantages facing native Hawaiians, ... and revitalizing native Hawaiian culture" (cited in Apgar 2006). However, in 2005 the decision of two of the three judges on a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel in San Francisco overturned the previous ruling and found that the schools' admissions policy "constitutes unlawful race discrimination" and "operates as an absolute bar to admission for non-Hawaiians" (cited in Barayuga 2005a: A1). Commenting on the court's decision, Goemans (cited in Apgar 2005b: A7) contended that it "is a reaffirmation of everything found in Rice, that all these programs are all race-based. This case sets precedents for other cases [challenging programs only for Native Hawaiians] and dramatically raises the national visibility of what exists in Hawaii and has grown since the 1970s, this pernicious racism." Goemans's remarks indicate the significance of the *Rice* decision as itself a major precedent in providing the legal basis for contesting other programs, both public and private, designated for Native Hawaiians.¹⁰

Goemans's reference above to "racism" in Hawai'i is ironic insofar as he views non-Hawaiians as somehow the victims of racism and racial discrimination by Native Hawaiians because the former are denied the privilege of benefiting from private programs such as the Kamehameha Schools that are fully funded by Native Hawaiian financial resources. For Goemans and other advocates of neoconservative racial politics, racial discrimination is fundamentally a denial of individual rights, whether those of Whites or non-Whites; thus, from their perspective, even a subjugated group like Native Hawaiians can commit discrimination against Whites. Goemans's mention of "national visibility" indicates why the California-based Grant was an attorney in the two cases against the Kamehameha Schools. Like the *Rice* case, the suits are of national significance because they are part of the nationwide neoconservative movement to abolish all race-based educational, employment, and government programs designated for the benefit of racial minorities. For those who support this movement, the Kamehameha Schools' admissions policy is no different from race-based affirmative action policies in higher education that they strongly oppose and are committed to challenge in courts across the nation.

Shortly after the court's decision in the *John Doe* suit was announced, the Kamehameha Schools sought and were later granted an "en banc" hearing of the case by a larger panel of

judges. After rehearing the case in 2006, fifteen judges of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled by an 8 to 7 vote that the schools' admissions policy does not violate federal civil rights laws and has a legitimate remedial purpose of rectifying educational and economic disadvantages suffered by Native Hawaiians (Barayuga 2006). However, in spring 2007 the attorneys for John Doe filed a petition to have the U.S. Supreme Court hear the case. Had the Court ultimately decided against the Kamehameha Schools, the disastrous consequences for Native Hawaiians cannot be overstated. They would have lost their right of access to their most highly valued educational institution that, besides providing a means of socioeconomic advancement for many Native Hawaiians, develops future community leaders and contributes to the development of Hawaiian culture.

The same 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2007 that the plaintiffs in the *Arakaki v. Lingle* (governor of Hawai'i) suit have no legal standing to challenge state of Hawai'i funding of OHA with state taxes, but the court did not dismiss the suit that was filed initially in 2002. The case was returned to the U.S. District Court in Hawai'i to determine if any of the plaintiffs are eligible "in any other capacity" (Da Silva 2007: A6). As a legal remedy, the suit seeks to have the state of Hawai'i abolish OHA and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) and have their assets returned to state control for the benefit of all Hawai'i residents. The fourteen plaintiffs in the *Arakaki v. Lingle* suit, representing different ethnic groups in Hawai'i, maintain that OHA and DHHL are race-based programs and therefore violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because they discriminate against non-Hawaiians (Apgar 2005c: A6).¹¹ As is evident since the *Rice* decision, lawsuits against Native Hawaiian rights and entitlements represent Native Hawaiians as a "race," instead of recognizing them as the native people of Hawai'i, and so argue that programs or institutions established for their benefit are "racially discriminatory" because they are based on "racial preference."

The initial U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on August 2, 2005 in the *John Doe v. Kamehameha Schools* suit in John Doe's favor generated immediate and widespread protests by the Native Hawaiian community, not only in Hawai'i but also in the continental United States. That very day, Native Hawaiian attorney Trisha Kehaulani Watson addressed a crowd that had gathered at the Kamehameha Schools administrative office, stating that the court's ruling should be a "wake-up call" to Native Hawaiians to take a collective stance that "we are a nation of people who stand together. So today, don't see this as a day we lost the 9th Circuit Court's decision. I hope five years from now we look back and say this is the day Hawaiians said, 'We have had enough,' and from this day forward, we move as one nation" (cited in Barayuga 2005a: A7).

The following Sunday, the Native Hawaiian community held a large rally at 'Iolani Palace, the former residence of Hawaiian monarchy, that brought together more than ten thousand people in solidarity (Vorsino 2005b: A1). The two-hour demonstration featured chants and prayers in the Hawaiian language and speeches by Kamehameha Schools' trustees and officials who declared their determination to oppose any legal challenges to their admissions policy. The schools' chief executive officer, Dee Jay Miller, told the crowd, "All over the world, Hawaiians are

standing as one. When we leave here today, we are one.” As in Watson’s remarks, the emphasis on sharing a common Native Hawaiian identity served as a strategic means toward collective agency to unite the community to protect their rights of access to their highly valued institution.

As is common in political demonstrations by Native Hawaiians, traditional cultural symbols were evident among many of them in the rally at ‘Iolani Palace. Some of the men wore *malo* or loincloths, while some women and men were dressed in *kihei*, a loose-fitting garment tied over the left shoulder. Many other participants wore red T-shirts with the expression “*Ku I Ka Pono*” or “Justice for Hawaiians,” which were produced for a 2003 rally after the Kamehameha Schools court cases had emerged, and since have been worn by Native Hawaiians at other political gatherings. Protest signs also were written in the Hawaiian language. After the rally, the participants marched to the Royal Mausoleum where Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop is buried, many carrying Hawaiian flags inverted as a sign that the Hawaiian nation is in distress. Other demonstrations and marches were held the same day on the islands of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, and Moloka‘i, and in the continental United States in California, Oregon, and the East Coast that manifested the rapid mobilization of the Native Hawaiian community in opposition to the court decision. As noted by Trask (2000: 5), such protest gatherings have the “power” to raise the collective consciousness of Native Hawaiians of their indigenous identity through the “political education” they provide:

The substance of the “nation” is made obvious when thousands of Hawaiians gather to protest the theft of their sovereignty. The power of such public rituals to de-colonize the mind can be seen in the rise of a new national identification among Hawaiians. After the 1993 sovereignty protests at the [‘Iolani] Palace of our chiefs, Hawaiians, especially the youth, began to discard national identity as Americans and reclaim indigenous identification as Natives.¹²

Yet another legal challenge to Native Hawaiian entitlements in the Post-Rice era is directed against tuition waivers and lower tuition rates provided to some Native Hawaiian students by the University of Hawai‘i. This university policy came under investigation by the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, including a site visit to the University of Hawai‘i (UH) at Manoa in 2004, after a civil rights complaint was filed in 2002 by John Goemans (Gima 2005a: A6).¹³ He contended that providing tuition waivers for Native Hawaiians and permitting out-of-state Native Hawaiians to pay the significantly lower resident tuition rate are racially discriminatory (Dunford 2004: A8). Similar federal discrimination investigations were conducted in 2004 at several other universities, which is indicative of how in the aftermath of the *Rice* decision, Native Hawaiians have become racialized and viewed not as a native people but as a racial minority comparable to African Americans or Latinos.

Five months after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its *Rice* decision in February 2000, U.S. senator Daniel Akaka introduced what has become commonly known as the “Akaka Bill” or

the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act. This bill establishes that Congress finds Native Hawaiians to be an indigenous people and authorizes a process by which they can form a “native Hawaiian governing entity” for self-governance (Reyes 2005a: A12). It provides federal recognition of Native Hawaiians comparable to that accorded to more than five hundred Native American and Alaska Native groups. Among other reasons, the bill was introduced to protect Native Hawaiian rights and programs, such as OHA, from further lawsuits such as the *Rice* case. It provides for the Office for Native Hawaiian Relations, established and funded by Congress in 2004, in the U.S. Department of Interior to serve as a liaison between the Native Hawaiian governing entity and the federal and state governments. The bill authorizes the federal and state governments to negotiate with the Native Hawaiian entity on issues such as the transfer of lands, natural resources, and other assets; the protection of existing native rights to those lands and resources; and the delegation of governmental powers to the Native Hawaiian government (Reyes 2005a: A12).

Opinions differ widely among Native Hawaiians, as they do among other Hawai'i residents, on whether they support or oppose the Akaka Bill. Those in favor of the bill include Native Hawaiian institutions, such as OHA, the Kamehameha Schools, and the Native Hawaiian Bar Association. Other supporters include Governor Linda Lingle, the state legislature, the entire Hawai'i congressional delegation, and 68 percent of Hawai'i residents, according to a 2005 public opinion survey paid for by OHA (Borreca 2005). Supporters of the bill maintain that federal recognition is a starting point for further advancement and protection of their rights and claims by a Native Hawaiian government in future negotiations with the U.S. and Hawai'i state governments.

Opponents of the Akaka Bill include a coalition of Native Hawaiians called *Hui Pu* (group to unite) and other sovereignty leaders and supporters who generally advocate the formation of an independent Hawaiian nation. They view the bill as perpetuating colonial control over Native Hawaiians by making them “wards” of the U.S. government like Native Americans under the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Sovereignty leader Kekuni Blaisdell contends that the Native Hawaiian governing body established through the Akaka Bill would be a “puppet government” of the United States because it requires the approval of the U.S. secretary of the interior (cited in Apgar 2005a: A6). Blaisdell further argues: “The Akaka Bill is an attempt to turn us into native Americans so that we can continue under the heel of the U.S. invader and colonizer of our homeland. ... But when we see the plight of the American Indians and the Alaska natives, we certainly don't want to be similarly treated and have our lands taken and our trusts violated.” Akaka Bill opponents also include those in Hawai'i who are most strongly against any government recognition of Native Hawaiian rights and claims, such as attorney William Burgess, leader of the Aloha for All group, and former *Honolulu Advertiser* publisher Thurston Twigg-Smith whose grandfather, Lorrin Thurston, was one of the leaders of the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Their position is that the Akaka Bill is “race-based” and therefore unconstitutional since it discriminates against non-Hawaiians on the basis of race by allowing only Native Hawaiians to participate

in the process of establishing a governing entity. Beyond Hawai'i, opponents of the Akaka Bill include the U.S. Department of Justice, almost all Republicans in the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In a 2006 report, the commission concluded that the bill would "discriminate on the basis of race or national origin, and further subdivide the American people into discrete subgroups accorded varying degrees of privilege" (cited in "Akaka Bill Faces Crucial Vote," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 2006).

Even after substantial revisions had been made since its introduction, the Akaka Bill was blocked from being voted on for several years by procedural measures initiated by several Republican senators opposed to it. In 2006, the U.S. Senate took a procedural vote that prevented the bill from moving to a final vote on the Senate floor. While the bill received a majority fifty-six votes, it needed sixty votes to advance. Nonetheless, even if the bill had been approved by the Senate, its passage by the U.S. House of Representatives and signing into law by President George W. Bush were doubtful given strong Republican opposition to it.

The constant legal and political challenges to Native Hawaiian rights and entitlements following the *Rice* ruling in 2000 demonstrate the superficiality and invalidity of the Hawai'i multicultural model in representing ethnic relations in the state. If the people who generously extended their aloha to newcomers to their islands are themselves denied just and fair treatment in their own homeland, where are the tolerance, harmony, and aloha spirit that are supposed to distinguish Hawai'i as a multicultural society? The model is analytically bankrupt in providing any explanation of what has been occurring to Native Hawaiians since the *Rice* decision.

Korean Americans: 1.5-Generation Identity

Korean Americans of the 1.5 generation construct and affirm a distinct ethnic identity that distinguishes them from their first- and second-generation counterparts (Danico 2002, 2004).¹⁴ These generational distinctions pertain to the post-1965 Korean American community rather than to the descendants of the first Korean immigrants who arrived in Hawai'i between 1903 and 1924 and include fourth- and fifth-generation members. As a result of post-1965 immigration, these more recent immigrants and their descendants constitute a majority of Korean Americans in the state. The Korean American case indicates the significance for ethnic identity construction of internal segments within an ethnic group and how they each can have a distinct identity that differentiates them from the others.

Based on her research on 1.5-generation Korean Americans in Hawai'i, sociologist Mary Yu Danico has argued that the 1.5 generation refers to Koreans who immigrated during their formative years such that they were old enough to have developed memories of living in Korea and young enough to have attended intermediate or high school in the United States. As a result, "1.5ers" become bicultural in Korean and American cultures and bilingual in the Korean and English languages. While they may not speak Korean fluently, Danico states that they are

able to converse in Korean, and they speak English with little or no Korean accent; however, the specific social, cultural, and class experiences of individual 1.5ers following immigration affect their degree of bilingualism and biculturalism. The life experiences of the 1.5 generation differ significantly from those of immigrants (like their parents) who arrive in the United States at an older age, and from those of the second generation who have no background of living in Korea. In general terms, the first generation speaks English with a discernible accent, feels more comfortable speaking Korean than English, identifies as Korean, and continues to follow Korean cultural values and norms. In contrast, the second generation speaks English as their primary language—including Hawai'i Creole English, although some of them can also speak Korean—considers themselves more local or American than Korean, and does not identify strongly with Korean culture. As Danico (2002: 148) observes: “What makes these 1.5ers distinct ... is their lack of identification [with] and their consciousness of not being first or second generation but ‘somewhere in-between.’ The feeling of being ‘neither’—and, to some extent, invisible—has demarcated 1.5ers from other Korean Americans in Hawai'i.” Given their bilingual and bicultural abilities, members of the 1.5 generation are able to switch their generational and ethnic identities “in varying situations as first, 1.5, or second generation or as Korean American, local, or Korean” (Danico 2004: 7).

Danico (2004: 151) emphasizes that becoming 1.5-generation Korean American is “a process of discovery” rather than simply a demographic fact of birthplace and immigration. She maintains that young Korean immigrants are not 1.5ers when they arrive in the United States and that not all of them will become 1.5-generation members since it involves a socialization process of meeting and interacting with other 1.5ers as they become adults. Through this process, they develop an understanding of what it means to be 1.5-generation Korean American and discover their shared ethnic identity with others who have similar experiences of having been child immigrants while growing up in Hawai'i and who contradict prevalent stereotypes of Korean immigrants (182). Danico (2002: 148) argues that it is the demeaning stereotypes of Korean immigrants in Hawai'i as bar hostesses, taxi drivers, and small vendors catering to tourists that lead the 1.5 generation to construct their own ethnic identity because of the resulting embarrassment and shame they feel being Korean American. These stereotypes depict Korean immigrants as sexually loose (young women), pushy, hot-tempered, money-hungry, and rude. Danico adds that, insofar as the 1.5ers hold the same negative perceptions of Koreans, they have themselves internalized the stereotypes held by non-Koreans. Thus, part of the process of becoming a 1.5er is no longer feeling ashamed and embarrassed about being a Korean immigrant. The degrading representations of Korean immigrants and their relegation to service occupations comprise major aspects of the societal conditions that confront Korean Americans in Hawai'i.

Consequently, 1.5ers seek to dissociate themselves from first-generation Koreans and their stigmatized identity, as is clear in a comment by a 1.5-generation Korean American college student about Korean immigrants at her high school (cited in Danico 2002: 155): “They were too

'cliquey'; they only spoke Korean, hung out with Koreans, and isolated themselves from others. We did not want to hang out with just Koreans, particularly those at our school. We wanted to blend in with the rest of the school and wanted to associate with local students." The "we-they" categorical opposition in this 1.5er's statement makes clear the division she perceived between 1.5ers like herself and Korean immigrant students, some of whom could have been of the 1.5 generation. On their part, adult members of the first generation, including their parents, consider 1.5ers as being more like the second generation and do not accept them as fully Korean because they tend to lack language fluency and cultural competency in not being entirely cognizant of expected behavioral norms.

As expressed in the student's comment, affirming a local identity is a very important means by which at least some 1.5-generation Korean Americans differentiate themselves from Korean immigrants since the latter, as well as other immigrants and newcomers in general, are not viewed as local. Expressing a local identity is much more common among working-class 1.5ers than among their upwardly mobile middle-class counterparts. Members of the 1.5 generation can claim a local identity by gaining knowledge of local culture, including the ability to speak pidgin English, and by developing close friendships with Korean American and non-Korean locals. However, 1.5ers often are not accepted as local by second-generation Korean Americans who, having been born and raised in Hawai'i, consider themselves local and view 1.5ers as immigrants. Much like 1.5-generation Korean Americans, their second-generation counterparts also wish to dissociate themselves from the degrading representations of Korean immigrants in Hawai'i. The lack of acceptance by second-generation Korean Americans combined with the desire of 1.5ers to distance themselves from the first generation leads 1.5-generation Korean Americans to construct and affirm a separate ethnic identity for themselves. Danico (2004: 157) maintains that another interest individual 1.5ers have in asserting their own ethnic identity is greater access to employment. She states that when seeking work they emphasize their bilingual skills and their ability to serve a multiethnic clientele, including Korean immigrants and locals.

At a more collective level, a Korean American organization in Hawai'i that consists predominantly of the 1.5 generation (90 percent) is the Honolulu Korean Junior Chamber of Commerce (hereafter, Jaycees), established in 1994 (Danico 2004: 160). Due to international Junior Chamber of Commerce rules, members of the Jaycees must be between twenty-one and thirty-nine years of age. Thus, they are relatively young compared to the members of the more established Korean American community organizations that have a primarily first-generation and older membership such as the Korean Chamber of Commerce. The Jaycees can be considered a professional, college-educated, middle-class group that has the communication and intercultural skills to interact with members of the larger society, including the news media, that first-generation community leaders may lack. Certainly, there are many second-generation Korean Americans of the appropriate age group who are middle-class professionals and could join the Korean Jaycees if they wished. However,

efforts by the Jaycees to recruit second-generation members have not been very successful because “Korean culture and Korean American community affairs” are not their primary social concern and, having assimilated into local culture, they want to join less ethnically based organizations (178).

According to Danico (2004: 165), the Jaycees are highly concerned to assert a positive ethnic identity for Korean Americans by challenging prevalent stereotypes of them as temperamental, aggressive, clannish, and materialistic immigrants who speak English with an obvious accent: “They hope to create a new image of Korean Americans as articulate, community-oriented, and open to all of Hawaii’s ethnic groups.” The Jaycees seek to accomplish this objective by various service activities for both the Korean American and local communities, such as sponsoring golf tournaments and an annual U.S. citizenship drive that is open to all immigrants. They thus advance an ethnic identity for the Korean American community as being more local than immigrant. The Jaycees also can be seen as employing ethnic identity construction to contest the socioeconomic subordination of Korean immigrants as tourist-industry service workers. The Jaycees demonstrated their advocacy role on behalf of the Korean American community when some of them responded to an article that they found offensive in one of the Honolulu daily newspapers about a golf tournament won by a Korean woman professional, Se Ri Park (Danico 2002: 150). Ironically, the article was written by a local Korean American sportswriter, Bill Kwon, who made reference to Ke’eumoku Street in Honolulu that is well known for its hostess bars or, as they are commonly called, “Korean bars” because some Korean immigrant women work in them along with other women. Kwon wrote: “They’re dancing in the streets of Seoul. And, I imagine, on Keeaumoku too; especially during happy hour ... Maybe there even might be a Club Se Ri on Keeaumoku some day” (Kwon 1998: D1). In response, a member of the Jaycees wrote to the newspaper’s editor:

We are not exactly sure what Mr. Kwon was trying to express, ... but one can’t help but think that all Koreans live on Keeaumoku, or that all Koreans attend “happy hours,” or that all Koreans engage in liquor businesses (i.e., “Club Se Ri”). What is most certain however is that Mr. Kwon’s comments stereotype Korean Americans as being at least associated with these activities. In effect and in a subtle way, Korean Americans are attributed with socially undesirable characteristics. ... It is possible that Mr. Kwon was trying to add humor to his article, however, this type of humor is not only offensive to Korean Americans but can lead to racist treatment toward Korean Americans.

In submitting his letter, the writer and other Jaycees members who sent similar letters of protest to the newspaper were seeking to change the societal circumstances to which they are subject, particularly the stigmatized stereotyping of Korean Americans by the news media.

This example of blatant stereotyping by the print media demonstrates how those with the power to represent others, even members of the same ethnic group, can be absolutely ignorant of how their writings denigrate others. It is significant that the sportswriter himself is Korean American, although very likely descended from earlier immigrants than the post-1965 Koreans in Hawai'i. In making no reference to his shared ethnicity with them in their letter to the editor, it seemed that the Jaycees almost considered him to belong to another ethnic group, or at least to view local Korean Americans as significantly different from immigrant Koreans like themselves.

Danico (2004: 166) contends that because of the bilingual and bicultural skills of their members, the Jaycees can serve as a "bridge," not only between first- and second-generation Korean Americans, but also between the Korean American and local communities. As stated by a Jaycees leader (cited in Danico 2004: 179): "We as 1.5[er]s can understand the needs of the Korean American community, but at the same time understand how to deal with the American culture. Our method of communicating with non-Koreans is more likely to bridge the relationship with the [Korean American] community and the others." Constructing a distinct "in-between" identity for themselves facilitates the assumption by the 1.5 generation of this mediator role for the Korean American community that enables them to address its political and economic concerns. Danico (2005) notes the possibility for 1.5ers to mobilize Korean Americans to have a greater "political voice" in Hawai'i. Such political activism is not necessarily limited to electoral politics; the Jaycees' protest of the news media's demeaning representation of Korean Americans is an example of such political advocacy. Representatives of the 1.5 generation are particularly suited to play a mediating role on behalf of the Korean American community since the first generation generally lacks the English language and intercultural abilities to work with the larger Hawai'i society, and the second generation lacks the desire to associate themselves closely with the Korean American community and its problems and concerns. Furthermore, the third- and fourth-generation descendants of the pre-World War II Korean immigrants do not have social and cultural ties with the post-1965 community, especially language, and thus cannot or do not wish to play this intermediary role for the Korean American community.

The 1.5-generation Korean American case highlights that ethnic groups, especially immigrant minorities, are internally culturally and socially diverse, and thus ethnic identity construction is a form of self-representation that may obscure significant differences, if not cleavages, within a group. It should not be surprising that members of the 1.5 generation would assume a leadership role in such ethnic identity formation for the Korean American community given their more proficient English language skills, higher educational attainment, and greater political awareness compared to the first generation. While those attributes are also held by the second generation, 1.5ers have a stronger sense of Korean American identity and closer ties to the Korean American community.

Globalization of Local Identity and Culture

During the infamous Massie case of 1931, the term “local” was first used to categorize collectively people from Hawai‘i, in particular, the five young men accused of kidnapping and raping Thalia Massie, the twenty-year-old White wife of a navy lieutenant. As “local” was used in accounts of the trial that appeared in the *Honolulu Advertiser*, it referred to the birth and upbringing in Hawai‘i of the five working-class youths, that is, two Native Hawaiians, two Japanese Americans, and a Chinese-Hawaiian. Their racial and class status and origins in the islands contrasted sharply with those of their White, military accusers from the continental United States, and those social and cultural differences signified the primary cleavage in Hawai‘i during the pre-World War II period between non-Whites and Whites. No doubt, some Whites had been born and raised in the islands, but they were of a far more privileged class than that of Native Hawaiians and the descendants of the immigrant plantation groups.

Historian John Rosa (2000: 100) has discussed the various ways that books, television dramas, and historical tours about the Massie case have contributed to the “cultural production of local identity” and preserved the collective memory of the case into the twenty-first century “as an event with strong meaning for locals.” He maintains that the case itself and subsequent narratives of it “have consistently served as a means to express local identity as a cultural identity continually in the making.” Other sources that contribute to this continual making of local identity include the everyday cultural practices, norms, and values followed by local people that are or become part of local culture in Hawai‘i.

Yet another significant source of the cultural production of local identity are articles that appear quite regularly in newspapers and magazines published in Hawai‘i. My interest in these journalistic discussions of local people and their cultural practices is because of their frequency of publication and wide circulation by the print media. Like newspaper articles on Hawai‘i as a multicultural model, they have the potential at least to influence hundreds of thousands of readers. Insofar as they express popular understandings of local culture, these articles convey certain meanings and symbols of that culture and representations of local people and their practices and beliefs. However, through this dissemination process, the media can reinforce certain commonly accepted views about local identity and culture that are stereotypic in nature and that do not reflect significant changes in their definition. In this section on local identity, I discuss the problems in representation that can result from journalistic descriptions of local people and from their limited focus on interpersonal relationships. I also review a few scholarly works and my own survey on the concept of local.

Despite the importance of being local to the people of Hawai‘i, journalistic discussions of local culture and identity often take a humorous approach. In a 2002 essay titled “You Know You’re a Malihini [Newcomer] Starting to Turn Local When ...,” *Honolulu Advertiser* columnist and playwright Lee Cataluna raised the issue of newcomers becoming local over time: “What about the people who didn’t grow up here, but who have put in some serious time and effort to

understand and adopt the culture? When do they know they've turned the corner to local-ness?" (Cataluna 2002: A25). She suggested that a list should be compiled for them of various cultural indicators such as: "You know you're local when you get irked by people who act too 'Mainland'"; and "You know you're turning local when you go to the beach and aim for the shade. People from cold places sit in the sun." While intended to be funny, Cataluna's discussion of local identity at least correctly emphasized that its definition is based on cultural criteria rather than mere birth or upbringing in Hawai'i, since those "who didn't grow up here" can still "adopt the culture" and "turn local" over time.

Cataluna's column was a response to what she referred to as "You know you're local if ..." lists regularly sent by e-mail among Hawai'i residents that include well-known references to local culture. These lists very likely originated after 1996 when the *Honolulu Advertiser* asked its readers to complete the above phrase and published the results, most of which also had a humorous tone ("You Know You're Local if ..." *Honolulu Advertiser* 1996: D1, D3). According to the newspaper's editors, the submissions "fell neatly" into six major categories that they gave titles in Hawai'i Creole English, with food the most frequently mentioned category: "Grinds: The foods we love," "Clo's [clothes]: Slippers and anykine," "Talk Story: The way we talk," "No Big Thing: Our philosophy," "Local Style: Stuff we do," and "Da Fax: You outta [ought to] know." Besides food, the other categories refer to the casual attire commonly worn in Hawai'i, including "rubber slippers" or flip-flops; the use of pidgin English; cultural norms and values that emphasize an easygoing, casual, and considerate attitude; common lifestyle practices; and cultural knowledge about Hawai'i and its peoples.

Consistent with the generally humorous approach to local culture and identity evident in readers' responses, the article was accompanied by cartoon drawings of local people engaged in activities mentioned in some of the submissions, such as wearing rubber slippers with formal attire. The numerous responses sent in by the general public represent popular conceptions of local culture, and the six major categories into which the submissions were classified could be interpreted as indicating the cultural practices, symbols, and values that local people consider most distinctive about their culture. However, the racialized, gendered, and classed image that is conveyed about local people from the readers' responses and the cartoon drawings is to some extent of a stereotypical overweight, non-White male who eats plate lunches, wears a T-shirt, speaks pidgin English, has a carefree attitude toward life, and knows much local trivia about Hawai'i but perhaps not much about the rest of the world.¹⁵ Such a distorted representation of local people obscures not only the many locals who do not conform to that overgeneralized image but, more importantly, the many significant political and economic issues that confront local people and their culture and about which they are concerned.

Another newspaper article that reinforced stereotyped notions of local culture and people is an "analysis" of the firing of then University of Hawai'i president Evan Dohelle by the UH Board of Regents in 2004, supposedly because he had "flunked 'Locals 101'" (DePledge and Creamer 2004: A1). According to the authors of the front-page article in one of the Honolulu

dailies, “While Honolulu has long been as cosmopolitan as any large city on the Mainland, an intense localism still defines many social and business relationships, and Dobelle’s East Coast confidence sometimes came across as arrogance.” In contrast to Dobelle, one of the local persons interviewed for the article maintained that being local involves “that whole sense of humility and self-deprecation, the need to listen.” As a recent newcomer to Hawai‘i, Dobelle apparently lacked the humble, reserved, and laid-back temperament that locals tend to idealize as characteristic of themselves. According to the authors, these social and cultural deficiencies on Dobelle’s part contributed to his inability to get along with members of the UH Board of Regents and to his ultimate downfall. The article thus perpetuates the stereotyped view of how a local person relates interpersonally with others and incorrectly elevates that belief to a major factor in the firing of a president of a research-extensive university.

An article in *Hawaii Business* magazine (Choo 2004), “Local Style for Lolos” (“stupid” in Hawaiian), also related the termination of Dobelle’s presidency to his lack of facility with local culture and local people.¹⁶ The cover story is subtitled “Should Lessons on Hawaii’s Cultural Landscape Be an Elective or a Requirement?” implying the importance of local cultural knowledge for newcomers. A sidebar article on “How to Do Business Local Style” purported to provide seven “tips for the wayward newcomer on doing business local style” given that “Hawaii has a truly unique business climate” (Youn 2004: 27–28). Intended for the “Mainlander” who would like to conduct business in Hawai‘i, the various words of advice are very comparable to the major categories in the “You Know You’re Local if ...” newspaper article and thus also contribute to the essentializing of local persons and their behaviors. For example, the “No Big Thing: Our philosophy” category is apparent in the tip “Don’t confuse slow with incompetent” because, while the pace of business in Hawai‘i may be slower than in the continental United States, “it doesn’t mean the people here can’t close deals.”¹⁷

Similar to the articles on the termination of Dobelle as UH president, the various suggestions offered to the newly arrived businessperson have a narrow focus on interpersonal interactions in doing business in Hawai‘i that are assumed to be governed by local cultural norms and values. However, one of the local businessmen interviewed for the article pointed out that “people [including locals] tend to confuse how locals choose to socialize with how they do business” (cited in Choo 2004: 29). In other words, local cultural practices and norms relevant to informal social interactions do not necessarily apply to formal business transactions. Furthermore, the narrow concern with interpersonal relationships obscures that, at least in some of the more economically significant business transactions, representatives of Hawai‘i-based companies are dealing with much more financially powerful transnational corporations and not merely socially inept newcomers from the continental United States or Asia who are unfamiliar with local cultural practices. From this political economy perspective, the cultural differential that privileges locals over nonlocals in conducting business in Hawai‘i is reversed, much to the disadvantage of locals. I maintain that a truly local way of doing business in Hawai‘i gives priority to the economic and political interests and concerns of local people rather than to simply closing a deal successfully. The poststatehood expansion of Hawaii’s tourism-dependent economy has

resulted in the concerns of local people being regularly overridden by corporations based in the continental United States, foreign investment firms, tourist industry and land developers, and transnational corporations.

Besides reinforcing stereotyped views of local people and their supposed behaviors, the print media also contribute to the reification of social boundaries through their discursive practices that contrapose local with nonlocal categories, such as between local and Haole that ignore changes in the definition of local that have resulted in the notion of “local Haoles.” The categorical opposition between local and Haole is evident in a newspaper article on the still unsolved beating death in 2002 of a forty-three-year-old White male carpenter who had lived in Wahiawa, a military town on O’ahu, for more than twenty years (Antone 2002: A1, A9). His widow is quoted describing her husband: “That’s what kills me because even though he was haole and had blue eyes, he was just so local. He was such a good person, he loved everybody.” She believes that someone started a fight with her husband because they thought he was “just another GI” instead of a long-term resident of the community. Similarly, a friend of the deceased described him in the article: “He could speak the pidgin, he loved Hawaii. He was a friendly guy that would stop and talk to anybody.” This article highlights the discursive contrast between local and Haole and is based on a violent incident between a White male and what are assumed to be locals. It thus reifies the historical social boundary between the two groups, but in so doing neglects the fluid nature of that boundary and its transgression by local Haoles, perhaps including by the deceased victim in this case.

The frequency of articles published on local identity and culture by the print media raises the question of why there is such a concern with these issues among Hawaii’s people. I contend that the reason for this interest is because of the ongoing cultural and economic globalization of Hawai’i that threatens the persistence of local culture and identity. These external threats to Hawaii’s people and their distinctive ways of life obviously are not new and, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, gave rise to the first significant change in the construction of local identity. This new meaning of local emphasized a shared appreciation of the land, peoples, and cultures of the islands and a commitment to maintaining control of Hawaii’s political and economic future from outside forces of change such as foreign investment, tourism development, immigration from the continental United States, and immigration from Asia and the Pacific (Okamura 1980). However, the myopic view of local culture noted above, focused on interpersonal relationships, results in an inability to perceive the larger national and transnational political, economic, and cultural context in which local people and their culture are situated, especially in opposition to those external forces.

The globalization of Hawai’i, particularly in terms of global consumer culture, has increased markedly since the late 1980s with the arrival of the “big box” retail outlets such as Costco, [Walmart], Kmart, and Best Buy. The spread of global consumer culture is visually evident in the dramatic transformation of Ala Moana Center beginning in the early 1990s from a popular local institution opened in 1959, with many of its stores and shops found only in Hawai’i, to

somewhat of a trendy shopping mall that could be found anywhere in suburban America since it has many of the same shops and restaurants.¹⁸ The buyout and replacement of Liberty House, a 150-year-old retail establishment in Hawai'i, by Macy's in 2001, and the opening of upscale designer boutiques that cater to free-spending Japanese tourists rather than sales-conscious local shoppers are symptomatic of the ongoing economic and cultural globalization of Hawai'i.

Driven by transnational capital, globalization threatens to eliminate or at least substantially reduce the cultural uniqueness of Hawai'i and is one of the principal reasons why there is an ongoing concern among islanders with local culture and its various manifestations. Far from referring merely to being born and raised in Hawai'i or to having the intercultural skills to interact appropriately with others, local identity has come to represent an assertion of resistance against the increasing cultural and economic globalization of Hawai'i. Unfortunately, this opposition lacks the collective and organized nature of local community struggles in the 1970s, such as at Kalama Valley, Ota Camp, and Waiahole and Waikane Valleys (Nakata 1999; Okamura 1980). In those struggles, local people resisted eviction from their communities by land developers that was part of a larger opposition movement to the uncontrolled economic development of Hawai'i, including tourism expansion. Since the 1990s, a more apparent manifestation of opposition to the globalization of Hawai'i, including loss of local control, is the ongoing movement of islanders to the continental United States [...]; however, they thereby express their sense of powerlessness to control the political and economic future of Hawai'i. Given the never-ending threats to local culture, it would be a terrible tragedy for Hawaii's people if all that eventually remains of local culture is eating Spam, wearing rubber slippers, remembering a few expressions in pidgin English, and going to Las Vegas for a vacation.

To gain an understanding of the changing meaning of local identity, especially among young people, I conducted a brief survey in my Japanese Americans in Hawai'i course in Ethnic Studies at UH Manoa in 2005. Students were asked to respond to an open-ended question: "What does being local mean to you?" They also provided general background information about themselves such as their sex, age, ethnicity, place of birth, length of residence in Hawai'i, and if they can speak pidgin English. The reason for the latter question is because speaking pidgin is generally assumed to be a clear cultural indicator of being local. However, over the years I have met an increasing number of college students whom I would consider to be local but who cannot speak pidgin.

The sample consisted of 126 students who completed the survey and provided 174 responses to the question since many students wrote replies that referred to different ways of being local. I did not include the statements from students who had lived in Hawai'i for less than three years because they tended to reply in very general terms that could apply to anyplace; for example, "I guess being local is when one lives somewhere for quite a long time and is familiar with that environment." As for the demographic background of the respondents, the great majority of them had lived all or most of their lives in Hawai'i (94 percent) and was born in the islands (82 percent). Their median age was twenty-one years old, and a majority was male (56 percent).

In terms of ethnicity, the largest group of respondents was Japanese American (25 percent) and was followed by students who were Japanese and some other ethnicity (15 percent), including Chinese, White, or Filipino. Fourteen percent of the respondents said they were Japanese and Okinawan, and next were Hawaiian (14 percent), Filipino American (8 percent), Korean American (7 percent), and Chinese American (6 percent) students.¹⁹ Since a majority of the respondents was full or part Japanese American, the sample is not representative of UH Manoa students or of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old residents of Hawai'i, but the responses do provide insights into contemporary views of local identity and culture.

The survey results indicated that, for the students, being local has a predominantly cultural meaning, as evident from the more than three-fourths of their responses that referred to cultural factors (77 percent). Nearly one-third of the responses stated that being local means knowing local culture, customs, values, or traditions (31 percent). As one student wrote: "Being local means being able to assimilate oneself into Hawaii's 'salad bowl' culture." For this and other students, there is a local culture that has developed over time from the mixing or blending of the cultures of different ethnic groups in the islands and which nonlocals have not assimilated. Another cultural factor reported by the students was appreciating or understanding the diverse cultures of Hawai'i (17 percent) as apparent in the following statement: "Local to me means not only being born and raised here, but having an appreciation for the many histories, cultures, and [ethnic] groups here. Local also means being ... open to the rich diversity found in these islands." This response emphasizes not only an appreciation of Hawai'i and its ethnic groups but also of the diverse cultures of those groups rather than a singular local culture. This meaning of local includes valorizing the cultural diversity of Hawai'i and being familiar with the cultural practices of different ethnic groups. The next most frequently stated cultural criterion of being local was speaking pidgin English and/or eating local foods (15 percent) that I combined because they often were mentioned together, probably because they both are somewhat stereotypic behaviors of local people. The survey question on speaking pidgin English indicated that a significant minority of students do not speak it (29 percent) and that a higher proportion of females (38 percent) than males (21 percent) said they do not. The last significant culture-based criterion of being local was having the "aloha spirit," being laid-back, or having respect for others (14 percent).²⁰ As a student commented: "Being local everyone has a common ground to stand on and we all respect each other and the place that we come from regardless of cultural/ethnic background. There are still many variations between ethnicities and the types of lifestyles and occupations, but if you're 'local' there's still a common set of values and respect for each other and the Islands. It may be a naive perspective, but the 'Aloha Spirit' promotes that idea." This response highlights certain cultural values, such as aloha and respect, in how local people relate to one another and is very consistent with the "tradition of tolerance and peaceful coexistence" dimension of the Hawai'i multicultural model discussed in Chapter 1.

A small minority of students maintained that being local means being born and raised or having grown up in Hawai'i (19 percent) that was the initial meaning of the term in the 1930s.

It should not be surprising at all that major changes in the meaning of local identity have occurred since Hawai'i itself and the relations among its constituent ethnic groups also have changed dramatically since that decade. Although the students are not representative of Hawaii's population, as young people, their responses may indicate the direction of changes in the definition of being local, for example, toward a greater emphasis on cultural criteria.

As for scholarly discussions of local culture and identity, sociologist Laura Edles conducted an "informal" survey in 2001 of 128 UH Manoa students who were asked to respond to the open-ended question: "What does being 'local' mean to you?" (Edles 2004: 57). She similarly notes that the great majority of her respondents (91 percent) defined local in "cultural" terms rather than in a "racial" or "ethnic" way, clearly defining local as a "way of life" and/or "attitude" and specifically rejecting "racial" and/or "ethnic" notions (61). As one student commented: "Being local to Hawai'i is a feeling, something deep down inside that ties you to this land and its people, truly understanding the way of life here, clothes, language, eating habits" (cited in Edles 2004: 57). Nonetheless, Edles (61) observes that this "inclusive, explicitly 'de-racialized' notion of local is not uncontested," given that for some Hawai'i residents the "notion of 'local haoles' is absurdly oxymoronic," that is, Haoles are not and cannot become local. Thus, while she contends that cultural definitions of local are a "response to the implicit assumption that 'local' *does* mean a specific 'racial' and/or 'ethnic' group" (58, emphasis in original), these definitions are really a response to the common assumption that local does not mean Haole since they are the major racial/ethnic group that historically has not been considered local until the emergence of the notion of local Haoles in the 1990s.²¹

Local Haoles can be contrasted with "mainland" Haoles and "military" Haoles who, as recent newcomers to Hawai'i with a tendency to associate primarily among themselves, are definitely viewed as nonlocal. Haoles are not the only ethnic group in Hawai'i among which distinctions are made between its local and nonlocal segments since similar differences are evident in the contrast drawn between local and immigrant Filipinos or between local and immigrant Koreans. These differences between locals and immigrants of the same ethnic group, which emerged in the early 1970s as a result of the post-1965 immigration of Filipinos and Koreans, are an early indication of the greater significance of cultural rather than racial or ethnic criteria in the meaning of local identity.

In her article on local Haoles, Keiko Ohnuma (2002) addresses the question of whether the notion of "local Haole" is a contradiction in terms. Focusing on what she refers to as the "dominant discourse of 'local vs. haole,'" she contends that "oppressions currently felt and culturally remembered are linked with the Other, the West—and thus readily equated to the visible sign of whiteness, the resented military, tourists, malihini [newcomers] and kama'aina [longtime residents] alike." While local versus Haole was the dominant discourse and social division in Hawai'i since the 1930s, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, local stood in categorical opposition to other groups besides Haoles, including non-White groups such as Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, Japanese tourists, and foreign (predominantly Japanese) investors in Hawai'i. Since

World War II, the presence of African American servicemen was and continues to be another reason that the military is not considered local. While Ohnuma (277) recognizes that Haoles can be considered local, she does not seem to understand that the primary social and cultural category opposed to local is nonlocal, and that nonlocal includes much more than Haoles and thus cannot be equated only with Whiteness or the West.

In the early 1990s, I argued that as a result of the ongoing globalization of Hawaii's economy and the consequent marginalization of Hawaii's people, "local identity has been maintained as an expression of resistance and opposition, albeit unorganized, to such outside domination and intrusion" (Okamura 1994: 174). However Ohnuma (2002: 282) contends that: "Rather than a stance of resistance, localism becomes a liability, as the ideology of 'Local vs. *haole*' increasingly is experienced as local vs. global." According to her, localism is a liability because "by definition [it] stands opposed to upward mobility. Its badges and codes of belonging, such as speaking pidgin, tend to preclude fluency in the wider world," and thus presumably disadvantage local people in resisting the global. This position is based on her essentialist, if not racist, perception of locals, or at least of what she maintains is "the 'most' local ... the dark-skinned, pidgin-speaking, working-class people who answer to the archetype" (282). Local people are actually quite diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and class, even including the fair-skinned and upwardly mobile. Furthermore, speaking Hawai'i Creole English does not mean that one cannot speak standard English since one linguistic ability does not preclude the other. Localism is a liability only if it is misunderstood as consisting merely of "culture and attitudes" that operate in interpersonal relationships. However, viewed as asserting a commitment to Hawai'i and its peoples and cultures, local as a shared identity serves as the basis of collective agency to contest the penetration by nonlocal forces that threaten local communities. As observed by historian Arif Dirlik (1996: 22), by the early 1990s, "local movements, or movements to save and reconstruct local societies, have emerged as the primary (if not the only) expressions of resistance to [global] domination."

Another contrasting category with local is Native Hawaiian, understood as denoting the indigenous people of Hawai'i. As noted above, this political identity and status has gained increasing significance since the 1970s as a result of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Trask (2000: 4) contends that the term "local" has been advanced particularly by Asian Americans in Hawai'i because it obscures their complicity in "maintaining institutional racism against Natives" and in continued Hawaiian dispossession of land and sovereignty. By claiming a common local identity with Native Hawaiians and their ties to Hawai'i, locals can blame Haoles for the historical and contemporary subjugation of Native Hawaiians. However as Trask (2) observes: "Calling themselves 'local,' the children of Asian settlers greatly outnumber us. They claim Hawai'i as their own, denying indigenous history, their long collaboration in our continued dispossession, and the benefits therefrom." As a result, some Native Hawaiian sovereignty advocates have dissociated themselves from local identity since it implies a common social status and identity shared by Native Hawaiians and the descendants of the immigrant groups recruited to work on

the plantations. Such a common status diminishes the uniqueness of Native Hawaiian claims to land, sovereignty, and other indigenous rights.

As apparent from the above discussion, local identity continues to change in its significance and meaning in response to both internal changes in the relations among ethnic groups in Hawai'i and external changes in Hawaii's relation to the world. This should not be surprising since, as I have argued previously (Okamura 1994: 165): "local identity can be seen to derive its significance primarily from structural rather than cultural factors. This structural dimension of local identity is based on the categorical opposition between groups considered local and those considered nonlocal, including haole, immigrants, the military, tourists, and foreign investors." This categorical opposition between local and nonlocal underlies the ongoing changes in the meaning and importance of local culture and identity. Along these lines, sociologist Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2002: 15) has argued that race is a "relational concept" insofar as racial categories (such as Black or White) "are positioned and therefore gain meaning in relation to each other." She continues that such "oppositional categories" are "inherently unstable," although stability is attained by representing the categories as "hierarchical." Thus, in the Hawai'i case, local tends to be privileged, although not necessarily empowered, over nonlocal categories, including Haoles, African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, tourists, the military, and foreign investors. Nonetheless, all of these nonlocal groups have been perceived as constituting political, cultural, and economic threats to the primacy of local people, culture, and identity in Hawai'i and thus have contributed in different ways to the instability in the fundamental opposition between local and nonlocal categories. These threats and the local opposition generated against them have resulted in substantial changes in the significance and meaning of local identity from the 1960s to the 2000s, evident in its reconstruction and reaffirmation. These changes have emphasized both the structural and cultural dimensions of local identity rather than simply birth and upbringing in Hawai'i and the cultural ability to get along with others of differing ethnicity.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how some groups use ethnic identity construction to advance their political or economic concerns in the larger context of their cultural representation by and social relations with other ethnic groups in Hawai'i. The groups discussed have different interests in creating distinct identities for themselves that range from restoring sovereignty among Native Hawaiians to contesting denigrating representations among 1.5-generation Korean Americans to resisting the globalization of Hawai'i among local people. In constructing their respective identities, all of the groups assert cultural and structural differences with other ethnic groups. All three groups thus can be seen to use both the cultural and structural dimensions of ethnic identity formation in representing themselves, although in varying ways. Native Hawaiians especially employ aspects of their traditional culture—such as language, rituals, values, and

myths—to express their unique identity as *kanaka maoli* that distinguishes them from all other ethnic groups in Hawai'i. At the same time, they create a structural boundary with other island groups by emphasizing Hawaiian descent or ancestry as the primary criterion for being considered Native Hawaiian. The Native Hawaiian case underscores how identity signifies cultural and social difference, if not uniqueness, as the principal basis for advancing their claims and entitlements to land and other resources in Hawai'i.

Another common feature of ethnic identity construction among the three groups is that they all seek to change for their advantage the societal circumstances that confront them. The 1.5-generation Korean Americans challenged the demeaning cultural representations of Korean immigrants as sexually loose bar hostesses and rude taxi drivers that, as prevalent stereotypes, are a dominant aspect of the societal conditions that Korean Americans must contend with in unequal Hawai'i. In the 1970s, local people contested expanding economic and political control of the islands by transnational corporations, foreign investors, and other external forces by organizing community-based struggles against tourism and land development projects. The identity formation initiatives of the three groups also demonstrate that political and economic circumstances themselves change, whether or not groups seek those changes. This is especially evident in the increasing constraints that Native Hawaiians have encountered in maintaining their indigenous rights and entitlements since the emergence of the Post-Rice era in Hawai'i and its legal and political challenges against them.

Finally, all of the cases clearly indicate how ethnic identities change in their meaning, significance, and expression over time, especially as a result of actions initiated by a group. Such changes are particularly evident among Native Hawaiians since the 1970s, even in the terms used to express their identity—from Hawaiian to Native Hawaiian to *kanaka maoli*—and in the greater political and cultural importance attributed to their identity. Similarly, since its emergence in the 1930s, local identity has been reconstructed to have a much more significant meaning than being born and raised in Hawai'i, and in the 2000s is articulated in opposition to the cultural and economic globalization of the islands. However, mobilizing and organizing this resistance based on a shared local identity and culture may not be as politically important to local people as it was in the 1970s; in other words, the significance of being local may have declined in Hawai'i since that time.

Notes

- 1 The late historian Yuji Ichioka is often credited with creating the term “Asian American” in 1968 when the Asian American Political Alliance was organized at the University of California, Berkeley.
- 2 In general, Smith (1985: 497) maintains that race and ethnic relations “scholars [need] to tackle the conditions and structures of authority and power that together provide the framework, bases, content and dynamic elements of all interracial and interethnic contexts.”

- 3 I express my *mahalo* (thanks) to Kawika Tengan for reading an earlier draft of this section and discussing his very useful comments with me.
- 4 I agree with Eva Marie Garrouette (2003: 137) who discusses the notion of tradition in relation to Native American peoples: “‘[T]radition’ does not equate to some petrified pattern of life: to what The People have always, unchangingly done. American Indian communities have found so many and such varied solutions to the problems of survival that individuals living in different historic periods might have difficulty even recognizing their ancestors.”
- 5 Another term in Hawaiian used to represent their native status in Hawai‘i is *kanaka o‘iwi*, literally “people of the bone.”
- 6 I thank Michael Omi for bringing Eva Marie Garrouette’s work to my attention.
- 7 Generally, a birth certificate that indicates the ancestry of one’s parents suffices.
- 8 In 1997 Rice, perhaps with Goemans’s legal services, filed two federal lawsuits against Kamehameha’s admissions policy for violating civil rights laws and tax laws. He later withdrew those suits because he lacked sufficient funds to pursue them at the same time as his suit against the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) (Okamura 2002: 142).
- 9 Indicative of how easily some non-Hawaiians claim to be Native Hawaiian, Santos remarked upon the resolution of her and her son’s lawsuit, “We’re very proud that we are Hawaiians,” although they are not (cited in Daysog 2003b).
- 10 In 2002 Goemans submitted several complaints to the Bush administration concerning a \$400 million federal loan to provide fiber-optic lines to 20,000 Native Hawaiians living on Hawaiian Home Lands administered by the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), a four-hundred-home DHHL project he claimed violated the U.S. Fair Housing Act, and the federal tax-exempt status of the Kamehameha Schools (Dunford 2004: A8).
- 11 The suit was filed in 2002 by William Burgess, the attorney in previous suits against Native Hawaiian rights following the Rice decision. Burgess and his wife, Sandra, who is Hawaiian, are leaders of the “Aloha for All” group that seeks to eliminate state agencies for Native Hawaiians. On their Web site (<http://aloha4all.org>), they contend: “Hawaii’s gift to the world is the Aloha spirit embodied daily in the beautiful people of many races living here in relative harmony. ... It is not in keeping with the spirit of Aloha for the government to give one racial group land or money or special privileges or preferences from which all other racial groups in Hawaii are excluded.”
- 12 The protests were held to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.
- 13 According to a U.S. Department of Education spokesperson, the investigation was put on temporary hold because of several then pending court cases involving Native Hawaiians (Gima 2005a: A6).

- 14 The information that follows is from Mary Yu Danico's two publications on 1.5-generation Korean Americans in Hawai'i (2002, 2004). I thank her for reading and commenting on a draft of this section.
- 15 The cartoon drawings that accompanied the article are of adult males and children but not adult females.
- 16 Again invoking a humorous perspective on local culture and identity, the cover of the magazine has a cartoonish caricature of a dumbfounded Dobelle perusing a book with the same title as the article in a parody of the familiar yellow-and-black-covered books on various technical subjects "for Dummies."
- 17 The "Grinds: The foods we love" category is evident in the business tip to "Come hungry" because "In Hawaii, the only thing that bonds people faster than the 'What high school you went?' routine is food. Local people love food."
- 18 Shops at Ala Moana Center that can be found at many other shopping malls across America include Abercrombie & Fitch, Banana Republic, Disney Store, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Neiman Marcus, Polo Ralph Lauren, and Williams-Sonoma.
- 19 Very small numbers in the sample were from other ethnic groups, including White, African American, and Vietnamese American, or said they represented various combinations of ethnic groups such as Chinese and White.
- 20 The aloha spirit can be defined as a cultural norm that emphasizes relating to others in a caring and considerate manner.
- 21 Although not a major racial group in Hawai'i in terms of population, African Americans are another group that historically has not been viewed as local.

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Reflection

- Discuss your cultural roots. What do you know or not know about your cultural heritage(s)? Why? How does it relate to your community/ies?
- How do you go about defining your identity? Why do you define it in the way you do? Is race, ethnicity, or both part(s) of your identity? Why? Based on our readings, which parts of your identity are racial and which parts are ethnic?
- Choose one characteristic of capitalism, and explain how it creates class-based inequality.

PART II

COLONIZATION, OCCUPATION, SOVEREIGNTY

Questions

- What were the key elements of the US civilization program adopted toward the Cherokees? What are the ways in which the Cherokees in the early 1800s resisted the transformation of gender relations?
- Consider pre-contact Hawai'i, and discuss Hawai'i's connection with other societies in Oceania. Discuss the political, economic, and cultural transformations in Hawai'i before and after contact with the West. Discuss the various forms of agency and resistance exercised by the Hawaiian monarchy and people throughout the nineteenth century.
- How does the legacy of blackbirding connect Southern plantation life to Oceania? What impact does blackbirding have on the colonization of Oceanic communities?
- What links do you see between Native Hawaiian culture and the ecology?
- How do gender and sexuality impact cultural genocide, recovering culture, and cultural production?

Women, Men and American Indian Policy

The Cherokee Response to 'Civilization'

Theda Perdue

The Cherokees originally resided in what is now northern Georgia, Tennessee, and the western Carolinas. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they became active in the deerskin trade introduced into the Southeast by Europeans, but by the late 1700s, Euro-Americans were more interested in land than in trading for hides. From the end of the Revolutionary War through the 1830s, the U.S. pressured the Cherokees to cede more of their land. As Perdue discusses, the Cherokees were at the same time subjected to a "benevolent" effort on the part of the U.S. to "civilize" them; that is, to remake them in its image. The Cherokees willingly accommodated certain aspects of American culture, but were still forced to cede their lands in the Southeast and remove to Indian Territory in the winter of 1838–39. The Cherokees built a new nation in the West, in what is now Oklahoma, while a small number of Cherokees who had avoided removal also reorganized as a tribe and today have a reservation in western North Carolina.

The implementation of a policy, conceived by whites and promulgated in Washington, among a Native American people often brought surprises and frustrations to those who saw United States Indian policy as the key to culture change. Even the Cherokees, widely regarded by contemporaries and subsequent scholars as the Native people most adept at cultural transformation, attempted to rewrite policy.

Theda Perdue, "Women, Men and American Indian Policy: The Cherokee Response to 'Civilization,'" *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspective on Native American Women*, pp. 90-114. Copyright © 1995 by Taylor & Francis Group. Reprinted with permission.

They sought to transform Washington's schemes into solutions for their own problems, as they defined them, and to use Indian policy to strengthen, rather than destroy, their cultural traditions. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Cherokees, who had participated in European colonial expansion as allies and trading partners, found themselves with an economy geared to trade and a government shaped by warriors. Invigorated by its political reorganization in 1789, the United States had little use for such anachronistic native societies, and so the federal government took on the task of "civilizing" the Indians, that is, converting them culturally into Anglo-Americans. Guided by an idealized view of men and women in their own society, the founding fathers sought to turn Native men into industrious, republican farmers and women into chaste, orderly housewives. The traditional Cherokee economy of male hunters and female farmers was anathema to "civilization," and so the "civilizers" turned to an economic restructuring of Cherokee life. Since hunting was no longer a viable enterprise, they expected men to replace women as farmers. These expectations, however, failed to take into account the durability of gender conventions and the adaptability of Cherokee culture.

The idea of Indians becoming "civilized" was not a new one. Eighteenth-century writers usually attributed differences between Indians and Europeans to European cultural, not racial, superiority and held out hope that Native peoples could progress to Europe's elevated position. Thomas Jefferson suggested that with time, literacy, and an increase in population, the American Indians might even produce an individual comparable to Isaac Newton.¹ Scottish social theorists largely shaped North American interpretations of culture, including that of Jefferson, and provided a framework for understanding Native peoples. Native peoples were "savages" whose cultures were less complex than "civilized" ones. "Savage" peoples lived off the bounty of the land without investing their labor while "civilized" peoples were busy, as Robert Berkhofer has phrased it, "transforming nature into property."² "Savage" peoples, according to the learned academicians revered by the early republic, did not farm. Benjamin Rush echoed the Scottish school when he divided all mankind into three groups: "The savage lives by fishing and hunting, the barbarian by pasturage, and the civilized man by agriculture." Agriculture, he believed, was "the true basis of national health, riches and populousness."³ For Native people to become "civilized," they must shift from hunting to farming.

Henry Knox, George Washington's Secretary of War, introduced the concept of the federal government as "civilizing" agent. Earlier attempts at "civilization" had rested primarily on converting and educating Indians, but Knox suggested a novel approach: "Were it possible to introduce among the Indian tribes a love for exclusive property, it would be a happy commencement of the business." In order to instill in Native peoples a sense of private property, Knox proposed making gifts of livestock to chiefs or their wives.⁴ While "civilization" involved a radical transformation of Native societies, including their government and religion, economic change was the first order of business on Knox's agenda. The "civilization" program became an official part of Cherokee relations with the federal government in 1791 when the Cherokees signed the Treaty of Holston. The treaty provided that the federal government furnish the Cherokees with "implements of

husbandry” and send residential agents to give instruction in their use. As a result of this aid, “the Cherokee nation may be led to a greater degree of civilization, and to become herdsmen and cultivators, instead of remaining in a state of hunters.”⁵

The Cherokees, devastated by invasion and impoverished by the decline of the deerskin trade, welcomed assistance. Yet they must have been somewhat bemused by the preferred lessons in agriculture. Not only had Cherokee women been farming for centuries, many of the crops and techniques used by Euro-Americans came from Native peoples.⁶ Most Europeans, however, assumed that the Native economy rested on hunting. Lieutenant Timberlake, who purchased corn from Native women, described the Cherokees in his *Memoirs* as hunters.⁷ James Hall wrote in his history of the West that “the Indians subsist entirely by hunting,” and Samuel Stanhope Smith described hunting as “the necessary means of their subsistence.”⁸ Others simply belittled the economic importance of agriculture or blurred the distinction between gathering wild foods and farming. Robert Beverley described “the natural Production of that Country, which the Native *Indians* enjoy’d, without the Curse of Industry, their Diversion alone, and not the Labour, supplying their Necessities. ... But none of the Toils of Husbandry were exercised by this happy People; except the bare planting a little Corn, and Melons, which took up only a few Days in the Summer, the rest being wholly spent in the Pursuit of their Pleasures.”⁹ Virtually all observers discounted cultivation by women: if only women farmed, then agriculture could not be very important in the Cherokee economy. Yet agriculture was the basis of “civilized” life, and so Native peoples must be taught to rely on its bounty.

A letter to the Cherokees from George Washington in 1796 outlined the key provisions of the “civilization” program, particularly the economic changes required of the Cherokees:

Some of you already experience the advantage of keeping cattle and hogs: let all keep them and increase their numbers, and you will have plenty of meat. To these add sheep, and they will give you clothing as well as food. Your lands are good and of great extent. By proper management you can raise live stock not only for your own wants, but to sell to the White people. By using the plow you can vastly increase your crops of corn. You can also grow wheat (which makes the best bread) as well as other useful grain. To these you will easily add flax and cotton which you may dispose of to the White people; or have it made up by your own women into clothing for yourselves. Your wives and daughters can soon learn to spin and weave.¹⁰

Washington’s instructions did not bode well for Cherokee women. Directly addressing Cherokee men, the President implied that animal husbandry and farming were male responsibilities in a “civilized” society. Spinning, weaving, and sewing were women’s work. Such expectations threatened the traditional division of labor in Cherokee society and whatever remnants of female autonomy remained. The President assumed that Cherokee men would take up the tasks and

adopt the work habits common in the United States while women would become help-mates, mere auxiliaries. Beyond the economic message, however, was an even more ominous one for Cherokee women: in a “civilized” society women belonged to men. The President addressed Cherokee women only through men: “*your own women*,” “*your wives and daughters*.”

The person charged with delivering and implementing the President’s message was Benjamin Hawkins, the superintendent for Indian affairs south of the Ohio.¹¹ Hawkins resided permanently with the Creeks, but he visited the Cherokees in the fall of 1796. Although the President had addressed his letter to the men, Hawkins spent his time primarily with women. One of his hostesses, a Mrs. Gagg, invited a group of women over to meet him: “They informed me that the men were all in the woods hunting, that they alone were at home to receive me, that they rejoiced much at what they had heard and hoped it would prove true, that they had made some cotton, and would make more and follow the instruction of the agent and the advise of the President.”¹² Because “civilization” rested on agriculture and domestic manufactures, tasks women traditionally performed, the women believed that the “civilization” program validated what they did.

Women’s level of production became apparent to Hawkins when he visited women in the town of Etowah: “They informed me they performed most of the labour, the men assisted but little and that in the corn. They generally made a plenty of corn and sweet potatoes and pumpkins. They made beans, ground peas, cymbkins, gourds, watermelons, collards and onions.” Furthermore, these women kept livestock. One group of women told Hawkins that they raised “hogs, some cattle, and a great many poultry,” and he encountered other women driving cattle to market. Women also had primary responsibility for domestic manufactures. They told Hawkins that “they made sugar, had raised some cotton, and manufactured their baskets, sifters, pots and earthen pans.” Again and again they indicated to him their support for “the plan contemplated by the government for the bettering of the condition of the Red people” because they understood the concrete ways in which support for agriculture, animal husbandry, and domestic manufactures could improve their lives.¹³

Women envisioned “civilization” bringing improvement, not profound change. The matters Hawkins discussed with them were perfectly comprehensible because farming, tending livestock, and making utilitarian items had long been part of their world. In some ways, surprisingly little had changed during the preceding century: they continued to farm as their ancestors had for centuries. Metal hoes made the job easier, but the work remained the same. Agricultural production had expanded to include a number of crops introduced by Europeans, including watermelons, onions, collards, fruit trees, and even a little cotton,¹⁴ but farming remained women’s work.

Cherokee women viewed animal husbandry as an extension of their role as farmers. The Cherokees traditionally did not fence their fields, and so the horses, cows, and pigs that eighteenth-century traders brought into the Nation presented a genuine threat to the crops. Although men complained to whites about damage done by roaming livestock, women actually

had the responsibility for keeping the animals out of the fields. This led to a growing familiarity with the animals' habits and needs. By the end of the eighteenth century Cherokee women were well acquainted with the principles of animal husbandry. They also knew how to use such animals. Nancy Ward, the War Woman of Chota, supposedly introduced the keeping of milk cows, and a white woman whom she rescued during the Revolution taught her to make butter. When Hawkins asked "what they wished, in aid of their own exertions," they answered "salt." This request demonstrates that women owned not only milk cows and laying hens but also animals used for meat: "Where they were able to supply themselves plentifully with meat, they were unable to preserve it for the want of salt."¹⁵ Keeping livestock and preserving domesticated meat expanded women's role but only within the context developed in the eighteenth-century deerskin trade.

Spinning, weaving, and sewing conformed to women's practice of making clothing, household utensils, mats, and baskets and of dressing deerskins, and it too promised to free them from dependence on the declining deerskin trade. Fabric had been part of Cherokee material culture throughout most of the eighteenth century because men exchanged their deerskins for calico, strouds, duffels and even finished petticoats and blouses. Although leggings and hunting shirts remained popular with men well into the nineteenth century, women dressed almost exclusively in the woven cloth for which men traded.¹⁶ The demise of the deerskin trade, therefore, inflicted a particular hardship on women who no longer could obtain clothing. As a result, they seized the opportunity to manufacture their own clothes. While a few women already planted cotton, spinning and weaving were new skills for most of them. Lah-to-tau-yie had learned to card, spin, and weave from her English husband, who ordered a wheel from England and made her a loom himself.¹⁷ A few women such as Sally Waters, who served as Hawkins' interpreter, had learned how to spin and weave while living in white settlements, but they normally had not been able to acquire wheels and looms. One woman told Hawkins that "once she had made as much cotton as purchased a petticoat, that she would gladly make more and learn how to spin it, if she had the opportunity."¹⁸ As soon as their agent Silas Dinsmoor, who served as Hawkins's subordinate in the Nation, made cards, wheels, and looms available in 1797, Cherokee women began adopting them. In 1809 a Cherokee man reminisced with Major John Norton about the women's response: "He [Dinsmoor] then addressed our women, and presented them with cotton seeds for planting; and afterwards with cards, wheels and looms to work it. They acquired the use of them with great facility, and now the most of the clothes we wear are of their manufacture."¹⁹

Moravian missionaries, who visited the Cherokees in 1799 to request permission to open a school, provide a good description of the Cherokees' domestic life three years after Hawkins's initial visit. One of the Cherokees they visited was John Watts whose "family is supported mainly by his mother-in-law, the widow of the former chief, Hanging Maw. This old woman is called Grandmother Maw by the whites and is respected as a very sensible and industrious woman." When the Moravians arrived, Grandmother Maw "was breaking corn in a field not far off and putting it in fine baskets woven of reed." At the homestead "there were only women and children" since the men were hunting. At Hiwasee, which was in the process of being abandoned, Kulsathee

showed Moravian missionaries “his cotton carding-combs, spinning wheel and, also yarn that his daughter had spun.” The Moravians visited the plantation of Betty Martin, the Cherokee wife of a white man. She lived in a hewn-log house with plastered walls and a stone fireplace which she had furnished with “two bedsteads with bedding, a table of walnut-wood and a closet with tin and china ware.” In addition to cotton cards, Mrs. Martin also had a loom. Her fenced corn fields “were plowed and cleared of grass; the wheat had been sown.” Mrs. Martin and her neighbors kept “horses, cattle, hogs, fowl, dogs and cats.” Their hostess also had “negro slaves that were well clothed.” Although Washington’s plan had not fully taken hold when the Moravians visited, there were promising signs.²⁰ Women apparently had embraced its major tenets.

The prosperous farms and industrious work habits described by the Moravians, according to “civilizers,” represented the Cherokees’ hope for the future while hunting deer and trading skins reflected the past. Hawkins described the poverty which reliance on hunting had brought: “Their men hunted in their proper season and aided them with the skins in providing cloaths and blankets, such as I saw, but this was not sufficient to make them comfortable and the poor old men, women and children were under the necessity of sleeping as I saw them in their town house.”²¹ Nevertheless, many men persisted in their hunting economy. When resident agent Return J. Meigs arrived in 1801, he had to settle a hunting party’s claim for 123 deerskins, forty bearskins, five small furs, and a buffalo skin that its eight members had left in the hunting grounds the previous year when a group of whites threatened them.²² Like Hawkins, Meigs discovered that by November the chiefs had “gone to their hunting grounds & will not return for two or three months.”²³ Yet hunting days were numbered. By 1808, claims which the agent paid for losses from hunting camps were more likely to be compensation for half a bear and some deermeat than a substantial pile of skins.²⁴ Hunting, however, was one of the things that defined masculinity, and few Cherokee men were willing to forego it. When a twenty-four-year-old man applied for admission to the school at Brainerd, he requested permission to hunt to clothe himself: instead, missionaries gave him a job on the farm.²⁵

The persistence of hunting and the Cherokees’ attachment to hunting grounds troubled “civilizers.” Thomas Jefferson instructed Hawkins in 1803 “to promote among the Indians a sense of the superior value of a little land, well cultivated, over a great deal, unimproved.” Eventually, he hoped, their hunting grounds “will be found useless, and even disadvantageous.”²⁶ When Cherokee men’s devotion to the chase momentarily thwarted Meigs’s attempt to secure a cession of the Cumberland Mountain region in 1805, he complained: “That land is of no use to them. There is not a single family on it, & the hunting is very poor. Yet those of idle dispositions spend much time in rambling there & often return with a stolen horse which they have afterwards to pay for. In fact it is only a nursery of savage habits and operates against civilization which is much impeded by their holding such immense tracts of wilderness.”²⁷ Meigs summarized the “civilizers’” major concerns. First of all, hunting promoted idleness rather than the industriousness on which “civilization” was based. Secondly, the common ground encouraged a disregard for private property. And finally, “wilderness” stood in direct opposition to “civilized” towns, pastures,

and fields. Meigs, Hawkins, Jefferson and other “civilizers” linked the cession of hunting grounds with the “civilizing” process. Herdsmen and farmers presumably no longer needed vast forests, and so the United States looked forward to the acquisition of the Indians’ “surplus & waste lands.”²⁸

Most Cherokee men, long familiar with the machinations of Euro-Americans, viewed “civilization” with suspicion from the very start. One Cherokee man revealed to John Norton that upon hearing the President’s plan, “many of us thought it was only some refined scheme calculated to gain an influence over us, rather than ameliorate our situation; and slighted his advice and proposals.” The fact that the President of the United States who normally sent messages about war and trade now wanted to talk about farming was enough to make the most gullible Cherokee man suspicious. Consequently, Cherokee men at first chose to ignore the “civilization” program. As a result, men suffered by comparison to women. John McDonald, an intermarried white man, told Norton that “the females have however made much greater advances in industry than the males, they now manufacture a great quantity of cloth; but the latter have not made proportionate progress in Agriculture.”²⁹ The men’s initial lack of enthusiasm and relative failure may well have derived from their assumption that because farming was women’s work, “civilization” had little to do with them.³⁰ For the “civilization” program to succeed among men, they had to adapt it to Cherokee culture.

Washington and Knox provided an avenue for just such an adaptation: they suggested that the transition to farming be eased by the Cherokees’ first becoming herdsmen. Spanish explorers had introduced livestock into the southeast in the sixteenth century (the Cherokees borrowed their word for “cow,” *wa’ka*, from the Spanish *vaca*). By the eighteenth century, traders had made livestock familiar, but Cherokee men exhibited little interest in keeping hogs, cattle, or sheep.³¹ Instead, they commonly regarded such animals as game. At the abandoned encampment of a hunting party in 1751, colonists found five sheepskins and some beef bones.³² White backcountry farmers as well as the garrison at Fort Loudoun complained constantly about the loss of livestock to hunting parties.³³ Because livestock usually foraged in the forest until late fall, the Native assumption that these animals were game was not implausible. The Cherokees had no tradition of domesticated animals other than the dog, which they apparently did not eat, and so the distinction between foraging animals that one could kill freely and those that belonged to an individual may well have appeared artificial. Even in the towns, domestic animals belonging to traders were not safe. Adair complained that “Indian youth are as destructive to the pigs and poultry, as so many young wolves or foxes” and that their parents did little to control their behavior.³⁴ Such an attitude did not bode well for the keeping of livestock by men.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Cherokees certainly knew the difference between livestock and game even though their behavior sometimes belied that knowledge. A vegetarian German pietist, who fled ridicule in Pennsylvania in 1795 and took refuge among the tolerant Cherokees, fretted constantly about the Cherokees lack of regard for God’s creatures. He offered to loan one of his milk cows to Cherokee neighbors on the condition that they would not kill

it, but according to Moravian missionaries who met him, “the Indians could not agree to the condition.” His compassion finally compelled him to provide a cow to an infirm elderly man despite his failure to exact the promise. Upon the old man’s death, however, the heirs slaughtered the cow.³⁵ As late as 1818, visitors to the Cherokees expressed amazement at the way men treated livestock:

It was near sunset when we arrived. When he [the Cherokee host] learned who we were, and saw the obligation he was under to entertain us for the night, he took his rifle as I supposed to shoot some wild game which might be near. But while we were standing in a sort of porch attached to his hut, he discharged it at a cow which was eating grass immediately before our eyes; he only wounded the poor animal, which ran bellowing and frantic about the yard. In this situation, two or three half naked negroes, who stood at the corner of the house to enjoy the bloody spectacle, fell upon the cow with axes; cleaved it to the ground; butchered it immediately, and in two hours after our arrival, part of the very cow which we had found browsing happily on the grass, was stewed for our supper.³⁶

Clearly Cherokee culture did not readily equip men to care for livestock.

Nevertheless, by the time of Hawkins’s visit some men were beginning to raise livestock and their numbers increased steadily in the nineteenth century. Among the first herdsmen in the Cherokee Nation were white men or the sons of white men. John Candy, who had come to the Cherokee Nation from East Florida in 1783, for example, owned “some fine cattle.” But native Cherokee men, even traditionalists, also kept stock. The Terrapin, who spoke only his Native tongue, “had raised some cattle of 1,200 lbs.”³⁷ Deer were still fairly plentiful, however, and livestock remained relatively scarce at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1802 when the Agent Return J. Meigs surveyed the boundary between North Carolina and the Cherokee Nation, he paid a dollar apiece for deer while hogs cost between \$3.25 and \$6.00 each and a single beef brought \$16.00.³⁸

The Cherokees ceded their last expanse of hunting grounds in a series of treaties in 1805–06. The remaining forests near their towns could not sustain a hunting economy, and so they acquired more cattle and hogs. These domesticated animals competed for food with the dwindling supply of game. White intruders further strained resources by grazing their herds on Cherokee land. In one part of the Cherokee Nation in 1805, over one thousand head of cattle belonging to intruders grazed on Cherokee land.³⁹ After a decade of rapidly expanding herds in the Cherokee country, one visitor observed: “Since they have become graziers, the game has nearly disappeared from their country.”⁴⁰ Cherokee men had found a new use for their “hunting grounds,” that is, land they did not cultivate. They simply restocked hunting grounds with cattle and hogs. By 1810, the Cherokees owned 19,500 cattle and 19,600 hogs as well as 6,100 horses

and 1,037 sheep, and all accounts suggest that the number was growing rapidly.⁴¹ The male approach to raising livestock, however, can hardly be called animal husbandry.

The work pattern of Cherokee herding did not differ dramatically from that of hunting. The Cherokees, like most southerners, did not pen their livestock during the summer nor put them in barns in winter. Major John Norton observed that “people raise cattle with the greatest facility, and without any further trouble or expence than that of giving them *salt*. In the winter, they feed in cane brakes, and in summer, they are dispersed in herds in the vicinity of little Salt Licks.”⁴² In the late fall and winter, the herdsmen simply shot the animals they intended to butcher. The practice appalled visitors accustomed to abattoirs or slaughter pens, but American Board missionaries requested a gun soon after their arrival “on account of the beeves we kill being so very wild that we cannot catch them without shooting.”⁴³ The process of capturing those animals which they hoped to take to market could be nearly as time-consuming as hunting. In November 1802, the chief Doublehead delayed his journey to purchase supplies, he explained, because “I am so engaged hunting and gathering my beef cattle that I expect it will be a moon or two before I can come.”⁴⁴ This “hunting and gathering” sometimes involved a mad chase through the woods. Daniel S. Butrick, an American Board missionary, could easily have been writing about game in 1818 when he noted that the congregation was “soon a little enlarged by the arrival of a number of men in pursuit of cattle.”⁴⁵

If we consider the grazing of cattle analogous to hunting, it is not too farfetched to regard horse-stealing as a substitute for war. Horse-stealing was not confined to the Cherokees in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but the border between the Cherokee Nation and the states proved attractive to Indian and white horse-thieves alike. The confusion over jurisdiction, the readiness of the federal government to settle claims for stolen horses, and the mountainous terrain made the frontier ideal territory for the illicit traffic in horses.⁴⁶ By the first decade in the nineteenth century, horses had replaced deerskins as a medium of exchange: Meigs described them as “a kind of currency.”⁴⁷ As such, horses helped soften the economic blow from the demise of warfare and trade. Horse-stealing fit well into a male culture that expected men to distinguish themselves on forays against the enemy. After the Chickamaugans made peace in 1794, young men had few other ways in which to demonstrate martial skills, prove their valor, and become men in the traditional sense.⁴⁸ Horse-stealing, however, provided men with some of the same rewards as warfare—it demonstrated prowess and brought profit—and horses became a kind of substitute for the war captives who previously had been sold as slaves. In one episode in 1797, the Cherokees literally equated the two: a Virginia man traded a horse for his brother who had been taken prisoner by the Cherokees some years earlier.⁴⁹ With the opening of a road through the Cherokee Nation, opportunities for theft became more numerous, and thieves became more brazen and less discriminating. Although horses remained the preferred prize, travelers lost hogs, cows, salt, clothing, boats, and slaves.⁵⁰ The Cherokee Council ultimately had to order return of property “detained” along the road.⁵¹ When Cherokee men adapted male imperatives to horse-stealing, they confronted a host of negative European attitudes. White

settlers were understandably reluctant to regard the theft of their property as an acceptable alternative to raids by war parties. Horse-stealing seemed particularly despicable because it inflicted enormous hardship on subsistence-level families and embodied a European folklore of nightriders and highwaymen.

The Euro-American response to hunting was less visceral but equally negative. “Civilizers” believed that hunting was at the very heart of Native “savagery” because it permitted men to engage in “sport and pastimes” instead of labor.⁵² Benjamin Franklin attributed the failure of colonial efforts to “civilize” Indians to “The Proneness of Human Nature to a Life of Ease” provided by “the Spontaneous Productions of Nature, with the additions of very little Labour, if Hunting and Fishing may indeed be called Labour when Game. Is so plenty.”⁵³ Thomas McKenney later suggested that a major obstacle to “civilizing” the Indian was “the preference he cherishes for sport and pastimes,” that is, hunting.⁵⁴

The adaptation of livestock herding to traditional labor patterns and land use left the “civilizers” in dismay. The Indians seemed to be reversing the process of domesticating animals by releasing them into the forest to forage. Although most whites in the South and on the frontier did the same, early proponents of selective breeding objected to the practice and decried its extension to Indians. The Indians’ half-wild beasts hardly represented progress or reform. Furthermore, this approach to animal husbandry deprived the Cherokees of the refined products—milk, butter, and cheese—that derived from domesticated animals. The only milk available came from those cows who decided, of their own free will, to come home.⁵⁵ Yet missionaries who later tried to set a good example by penning their livestock complained that the animals starved in winter.⁵⁶

John McDonald, an intermarried white man, told John Norton why livestock raising was the only part of the “civilization” program most Cherokee men had accepted: “They raise great herds of cattle, which can be done with little exertion; and the sale of these brings much wealth into the Nation.”⁵⁷ That is, herding demanded the same kind of “exertion” as hunting and provided the same kind of return. Cherokee herding methods required little of what Europeans considered labor and failed to promote the industrious habits associated with “civilization.” Meigs pointed out with some disgust that “the raising & manufacturing of cotton is all done by the Indian women. ... The Indian men attend to the raising of cattle and swine—this costs them no labour, a thing they will avoid as long as possible.”⁵⁸ In the eyes of Meigs and other “civilizers,” farming constituted labor but herding, like hunting, did not. In their attempt to avoid women’s work—farming—men seemed to be avoiding any sort of labor at all.

Men found ways to contribute to agricultural productivity and compensate for the women’s labor lost to spinning and weaving without actually farming themselves. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, many of them began to lease or rent land to white families on shares.⁵⁹ The Council had grave misgivings about the practice since it brought large numbers of white people into the Nation and expelling them at the end of the year was difficult. In 1808 the Council considered banning the practice, but Agent Meigs protested: “I wish you to weigh this matter well before you act because I think you will find that you will again want the help of

poor [white] people to raise corn & do other work for you & in a year or two you will do it. All People that ever I know hire poor people to work for them. Some families don't want to hire because they have help enough of their own; but other families have not hands of their own & they ought not to be deprived of having help when they can find it."⁶⁰ Meigs clearly saw share-cropping as a way for Cherokees to increase agricultural productivity, but by 1811 he had changed his mind. Instead, cropping was a way for men to avoid work: "They have no need for white men as croppers because it encourages idleness in Indians."⁶¹ As concern over intruders grew, the practice of cropping declined.

Cherokees found another form of labor in African slaves.⁶² Traders had brought their own slaves into the Cherokee country in the eighteenth century, and Cherokee warriors had participated in a frontier slave trade. Like horse-stealing, the theft of slaves presented men with an opportunity to remain warriors, and so an illicit traffic in slaves continued well into the nineteenth century.⁶³ By the early nineteenth century, however, Cherokees also were acquiring slaves for their own use. The transition to slave labor, like that to livestock herding, seems to have been one in which Cherokees invested little thought. When Young Wolf wrote his will in 1814, he explained how he managed to accumulate his estate: "From herding my brother's cattle I recevd one calf which I took my start from, except my own industry, & with cow & calf which I sold, I bought two sows & thirteen piggs sometime after I was abel to purchase three mares & the increase of them since is amounted to thirty more or less & from that start I gathered money enough to purchase a negro woman named Tabb, also a negro man named Ceasar."⁶⁴ By 1809 slaves numbered 583.⁶⁵ While some of these probably belonged to whites employed by or married to Cherokees, most belonged to Indians. According to a census taken in 1825, the number had increased to 1,277, and by 1835 had reached nearly sixteen hundred. Instead of becoming the yeoman farmers so admired by Washington and Jefferson, most Cherokee men (like Washington and Jefferson) seemed more inclined to adopt the aristocratic planter as a role model. Only a very few ever achieved this goal, but those who did dominated Cherokee economic and political life.⁶⁶

The extent to which Cherokee men took up the plow themselves is difficult to determine. As early as 1796, Hawkins discovered the Terrapin plowing.⁶⁷ Furthermore, men normally requested plows from the agent, but these petitioners were headmen who spoke for their towns rather than themselves.⁶⁸ Other evidence in the agent's records is contradictory: Meigs's assistant requested a plow for Arthur Burns, "one of the most indefatigable and industrious men," while Bartlet Robbins "was sent by Nancy Falling to the Blacksmith's to have some plough irons sharpened."⁶⁹ The novelty of the plow, its status as a gift of the federal government, the example of white men, and the association of the plow with horses, however, may have led increasing numbers of Cherokee men to become directly involved in farming. Men probably adopted the new technology of plow agriculture while women continued to perform their normal tasks, such as hoeing, traditionally associated with farming. Lists of goods being sent from the agency to various Cherokee towns included hoes, women's traditional farming implement, as well as the

more innovative plow.⁷⁰ Often hoes substantially outnumbered plows, but plows cost four times as much and required the services of a blacksmith to remain useable.⁷¹ By 1811 there were about five hundred plows in the Nation, perhaps one for every four families.⁷²

Horses provided an obvious link between men and farming, and by the 1820s, most Cherokees had hitched horses to their plows.⁷³ Missionary Daniel Butrick wrote that “a horse is their chief dependence for raising support for their families,” and when his own mount ran away, he had difficulty borrowing one because the Cherokees had all of theirs in the fields.⁷⁴ In 1821, missionaries introduced oxen, which seem to have been common elsewhere in the South, but horses remained the draft animal of choice.⁷⁵ Men probably held the reins. Men always had helped women prepare fields and plant corn; then women took over the care of the crops. The plow does not seem to have altered this arrangement substantially, and as a result, men appeared idle during much of the year. As late as 1828, over thirty years after the inauguration of the “civilization” program, missionaries complained that men did not fully occupy themselves with farming:

Every family has a corn field, plough & horse or horses, to till it. They keep cows & hogs—raise horses & beeves—The women spin & weave—In general old & young are decently clad in cotton cloth of their own making—especially on the Sabbath. The season of raising corn is a time of general industry with both men & women & perhaps we may say with most of the women, the year round. But as agriculture is extended only to raising corn, potatoes, & cotton (except with a very few, lately, a little wheat) the men have not a sufficient stimulus to keep up their exertions after the corn is laid by—This is a very great evil, both as it tends to demoralize, & also to keep them poor. The women are evidently going before the men; & we think this (at least in a great degree) is owing to their being more constantly employed.⁷⁶

As long as men confined themselves to merely plowing the fields, little hope existed for keeping them “constantly employed.” Albert Gallatin complained that “although the men may to some extent have assisted the women in the cultivation of the ground, the greater part of the labors still fell upon the latter.”⁷⁷ He did concede that the Cherokees had, in a limited way, “become an agricultural nation, meaning thereby that state of society, in which the men themselves do actually perform agricultural labor.” But even among the Cherokees, he estimated, only one third of the men farmed.⁷⁸

Nineteenth-century observers agreed that men lagged behind women in adapting to the new economic order, perhaps because “civilized” occupations conformed more nearly to traditional roles of women than of men. But a market economy underlay the “civilization” program as surely as it had the deerskin trade and made the Cherokees no more likely to create the agrarian republic of yeomen farmers than the Jeffersonians and their successors. The economic expansion

of the United States drew the Cherokees and other Americans into a maelstrom from which they could not have escaped even if they had been so inclined. As it was, the Cherokees had long ago adapted their political and economic institutions to the demands of an international market. The vast majority of Cherokee men and women had little desire to withdraw.

The women with whom Hawkins spoke had a sophisticated understanding of their own economic subservience. They knew that male ascendancy derived largely from the eighteenth-century market in deerskins. Consequently, they shifted the conversations with Hawkins from production to marketing. The women who told Hawkins about their agricultural production added that “if they could be directed how to turn their labour to account like the white people, they should be contented.”⁷⁹

Cherokee women had no complaints about their role as farmers. What they wanted was an opportunity “to turn their labor to account,” that is, to profit from what they produced. The obstacles confronting these erstwhile entrepreneurs were considerable. Hawkins heard their complaints: “I was here informed of some of the difficulties and hardships which these poor people are subject to. They sell the fowls grown, 2 for 2½ yards of binding worth 2 cents, a bushel of corn for a quart of salt and sometimes a pint, and the woman had just returned from the [white] settlements, a journey of 17 days. She carried a bushel and a half of chestnuts on her back and gave them for a petticoat.”⁸⁰ This woman, like most Cherokees, needed to buy salt, clothing, and other goods, and so she had to sell at whatever price she could get. Often Cherokees could find no market at all for what they produced. A group of women complained “that they would make corn enough but that they never could sell it.”⁸¹ One of their difficulties was the absence of a substantial internal market. Since most Cherokee households farmed, corn had little market value. Those Cherokees who had no corn usually had no means by which to pay for it.⁸² Drought tended to touch all Cherokees equally so that when Cherokees needed to buy corn, no one had corn to sell.⁸³ Scattered white farmsteads near the Nation’s borders offered poor markets, and the distance to larger white settlements coupled with the hardships of travel posed problems for women who had to tend house and mind children as well as farm.⁸⁴ The Creeks briefly offered women an opportunity to enter the market: by 1809, Cherokee women were swapping them cloth for cattle.⁸⁵ War soon interrupted the trade, however, and Creeks acquired their own spinning wheels and looms.

A broader trade in textiles illustrates the problem women had with marketing. Cherokee women produced a prodigious amount of cloth. By 1809 the Cherokees had sixteen hundred spinning wheels and 467 looms in a total population of just over twelve thousand. Gideon Blackburn, a Presbyterian missionary, estimated that women could produce 584,684 yards of cloth a year if they kept their machines operating constantly.⁸⁶ Cherokee women, of course, spent many hours engaged in activities other than textile manufacturing. While the potential is staggering, the more modest actual production of perhaps half Blackburn’s estimate was still substantial.⁸⁷ Cherokee women did not, however, control the market in textiles. During the eighteenth century, participation in commerce had come to define masculinity as much as war

or hunting, and factory-made textiles had become part of the material culture dominated by men and non-Cherokees. In the nineteenth century, textiles became a trophy for young men no longer permitted to go to war, and whites along the frontier complained bitterly about the loss of their best bedding.⁸⁸ Furthermore, textiles played a major role in diplomacy. In 1801 the chiefs notified their new agent, Return J. Meigs, that they no longer wanted their annuity paid in goods “not of substantial use,” that is, silk stockings, gold lace, damask tablecloths, morocco shoes, and ostrich feathers. Instead, they wanted “blankets, strouds & coating.” Meigs added in his instructions to the supplier, “Some fine Cloth is always expected for the Chiefs.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, the government factory at Tellico Blockhouse in eastern Tennessee stocked a substantial array of textiles and supplied those Cherokees who had money to spend or credit to command. In 1804, the federal government completed a road across the Cherokee Nation which reduced shipping costs by almost one half, and presumably the cost of textiles declined. The government factory closed in 1811, but Cherokee merchants filled that commercial vacuum and continued to market fabric made outside the Nation. Competition to women’s manufactures also came from unlikely sources. Missionaries, who arrived in large numbers in the decade following the closing of the government factory, competed with both domestic producers and local purveyors of fabrics. Ann Paine, a New Englander who visited missionaries in 1820, noted that

many of the Cherokee women are skillful in spinning cotton which they manufacture into cloth, but the Mission is much benefitted by the sale of cloth and garments from the charity boxes. For these the Cherokees give money and articles of produce; and they are sold with considerable proffit as it would not do for the Missionaries to undersell the Cherokee Merchants, at whose stores common shirt factory is sold at 50 cts per yard—A common factory shirt from the boxes is sold for two dollars.⁹⁰

In addition to marketing textiles, the mission also participated in production, although on a more limited basis. The girls at one mission school made quilts from old cloth. The quilts brought six or seven dollars each from the Cherokees and “please them very much.”⁹¹

Women’s difficulty in participating in the market stemmed from far more than the industrial and market revolutions. Cherokees had well-established mechanisms for commerce that proved remarkably persistent. Rooted in part in ancient cultural traditions that entrusted men with foreign relations and women with domestic ones, these mechanisms had adapted to an international market economy in the eighteenth century. Men were in the forefront of the deerskin trade in part because men obtained the skins, but also because men dealt with outsiders, that is, with European traders and emissaries. For women suddenly to have entered this world would have disrupted a long-established protocol. Women certainly sold corn, livestock, and even textiles, but the primary responsibility for marketing rested with men. The Cherokees simply

adapted established patterns of behavior to new circumstances. Women continued to be women according to old definitions, and men continued to be men.

Within the context of the “civilization” program, men served as the intermediaries between women and the federal government and served as conduits for most of the tools and implements that the agent made available to the Nation. Requests for cotton cards, spinning wheels, looms, and corn hoes normally came from men.⁹² Sometimes women directly instigated these requests. Pathkiller and Toochalee prefaced their application for wheels and cards with the words, “These women came to me to write them a few lines to you.”⁹³ Doublehead made a particularly poignant plea when he wrote Meigs: “I have to solicit of you in behalf of two poor middle aged women living here, who have begged me to make the application having large families composed entirely of girls, that you will be so good as to forward them by me three small wheels and three pairs of cards, the familys are very poor and have no other means but their industry to cloth themselves and show much anxiety to learn the usefull arts, they are deprived of the aid of any man in their family having no man in either.”⁹⁴ One of the things these women needed a man for was to appeal to the agent for tools.

As intermediaries, men also often marketed commodities associated with women. When Meigs participated in surveying the boundary line between North Carolina and the Cherokee Nation in 1802, he purchased sweet potatoes, cabbage, corn and even “Indian bread” from men.⁹⁵ Of the eighty-seven receipts Meigs issued to his suppliers, only three—for two chickens, forage, and “provision”—were to women. Women’s total direct income from the survey was only \$3.75.⁹⁶ This does not mean, of course, that women did not produce some of the commodities that Meigs bought from men or profit indirectly, but women did not sell the product of their labor, at least not to Meigs. A new symbiotic relationship between men and women, reminiscent of traditional roles, seemed to be emerging: women, joined by white share-croppers and black slaves, became the primary producers in Cherokee society while men became the entrepreneurs.

In 1801 several headmen from towns along the Tennessee River visited Hawkins: “They stated the improvements made in the products of the country; that a total change had taken place in the habits of the nation since the introduction of the plan for their civilization.” Even more significantly, these men requested Hawkins’s aid. They told him “that a desire for individual property was very prevalent, and that the current of conversation now was how to acquire it, by attention to stock, to farming and to manufactures.”⁹⁷ These men viewed “civilization” in strictly material terms: it was a way to obtain “individual property.” With the end of the deerskin trade and colonial wars, men had lost an acceptable way to express the aggressive, competitive, individualistic male culture that had shaped their lives. Similarly, the lustre faded on symbols of that lifestyle—guns, war trophies, items of personal adornment. Now they saw an opportunity to reorient male culture toward the acquisition of “individual property,” and property became an emblem of success. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, business opportunities abounded in the Cherokee Nation, and intermarried white men and their sons as well as native Cherokees eagerly took advantage of them. The Agent employed a blacksmith to repair tools,

but the demand for his services was such that several Cherokees went into partnerships with smiths. Similarly, the demand on the public miller led individual Cherokees to construct their own grist and saw mills and employ skilled white men to run them.⁹⁸ By 1804 the business of the National Council was business. The Council granted five-year leases for “houses of entertainment” along the Cumberland Road through Cherokee territory and issued permits to blacksmiths, wheelwrights, millers, a cooper, and saltpetre makers. Apparently agreeing with Meigs on the importance of education in transacting “the ordinary business required in civilized life,” the headmen also issued permits to a schoolmaster and Moravian missionaries on the condition that the latter focus on education.⁹⁹

The completion of the 220 mile long road between Augusta, Georgia and Nashville, Tennessee opened other possibilities for men to profit. Individual Cherokee men, in partnership with whites, obtained contracts for taverns and ferries, a turnpike company organized for the maintenance of the road and then sub-contracted its obligations, and a Cherokee applied for the mail contract.¹⁰⁰ The Georgia road proved so successful in facilitating commerce that the Cherokees built another 300 miles of wagon roads at their own expense.¹⁰¹ In addition to their income from these enterprises, according to Meigs, “they have no inconsiderable quantity of cash in circulation which they receive annually for the sale of cattle and swine.”¹⁰² James Vann, in fact, had sufficient cash in 1805 to be robbed of \$3,500.¹⁰³

Just as many Cherokee men failed to become great warriors, all Cherokees did not share equally in the spoils of economic expansion. In 1809 Meigs wrote the Secretary of War: “A spirit of industry does by no means pervade the general population. The greatest number are extremely poor from want of industry. The hunting life is here at an end: but a predeliction for the hunter state pervades a great part of the Cherokees.”¹⁰⁴ These Cherokees, he believed, should move west of the Mississippi. Meigs defined “want of industry” as the refusal of “the men to labour in the Fields with their own hands.”¹⁰⁵ But even wealthy Cherokee men did not “labour.” They merely had the capital, inherited from white fathers or acquired through trade, horse-stealing, or official position, to invest in other kinds of labor. As town chiefs and members of the National Council, prominent men had the power to award themselves contracts and permits or to receive gifts, bribes, and private reservations from the federal government.¹⁰⁶ These men adroitly used their capital and political positions to increase wealth and the symbol of success, individual property.

The statistical table Agent Meigs sent to the Secretary of War in 1809 indicated a remarkable change in Cherokee material culture. “The Cherokees,” he asserted, “[have] prospered by the pastoral life and by domestic manufactures.” Livestock abounded and spinning wheels whirled throughout the Nations.¹⁰⁷ In more fundamental ways, however, Cherokee lives remained remarkably untouched: the Cherokees had adapted “civilization” to their own expectations of men and women. Cherokee women used the “civilization” program to embellish their culture, but they did not transform it. Certainly, women added new crops, cotton in particular, and new skills such as spinning and weaving, but they continued to farm, keep house, and tend children just as they always had done. Similarly, men’s culture retained the basic ethic that traditionally

governed hunting and warfare, but aggression and competition found expression in the rapidly expanding market economy. Rather than simply embracing the tenets of “civilization” or imitating Anglo-American society, Cherokee men and women restructured United States Indian policy to conform to their own cultural imperatives.

Notes

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- 2 Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (1953; rev. ed., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 66, 83–90; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 138.
- 3 George W. Corner, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His “Travels Through Life” Together with His Commonplace Book for 1789–1813*, *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 25, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 71; Benjamin Rush, “Medicine Among the Indians,” in *Essays Literary, Moral, and Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas and Samuel F. Bradford, 1798), 290.
- 4 Henry Knox to George Washington, 7 July 1789, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs (ASP)*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1832), 1: 53.
- 5 *ASP*, 1: 125.
- 6 G. Melvin Herndon, “Indian Agriculture in the Southern Colonies,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 44 (1967): 283–97.
- 7 Henry Timberlake, *Lieut. Henry Timberlake's Memoirs, 1756–1765*, ed. Samuel Cole Williams (Johnson City, TN: The Watauga Press, 1927), 99.
- 8 James Hall, *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners in the West*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: H. Hall, 1835), 1: 92; Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species*, ed. Winthrop Jordan (1810; reprint ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 216.
- 9 Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. Louis B. Wright (1705; reprint ed., Chapel Hill, 1947), 156.
- 10 George Washington to the Cherokees, 1796, *Cherokee Phoenix*, 20 March 1828.
- 11 See Merritt B. Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins—Indian Agent* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951); Frank L. Owsley, Jr., “Benjamin Hawkins, the First Modern Indian Agent,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly*

- 30 (1968), 7–13; Florette Henri, *The Southern Indians and Benjamin Hawkins, 1796–1816* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986).
- 12 Benjamin Hawkins, *Letters of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796–1806, Georgia Historical Society Collections* 9 (1916), 20. Hawkins also called on one family in which both father and mother were away hunting, and the daughters entertained him (pp. 22–23).
 - 13 *Hawkins*, 18, 21–22.
 - 14 Gary C. Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition: A Study of Changing Culture and Environment Prior to 1775* (Research Paper No. 181; Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1977), 126–31.
 - 15 *Hawkins*, 16, 21–22.
 - 16 John Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816*, ed. Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1970), 36, 51; Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country 1540–1800* (Johnson City, TN: The Watauga Press, 1928), 477.
 - 17 Jack Kilpatrick, ed., “The Wahnenuhi Manuscript: Historical Sketches of the Cherokees,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 196, 195.
 - 18 *Hawkins*, 18.
 - 19 Norton, 36.
 - 20 Williams, *Early Travels*, 469–471, 485, 490.
 - 21 *Hawkins*, 21–22.
 - 22 Charles Hicks to Return J. Meigs, 7 Sept. 1801, Records of the Cherokee Agency in Tennessee, 1801–35, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Microcopy M–208 (henceforth M–208).
 - 23 Meigs to Henry Dearborn, 30 Nov. 1801, M–208.
 - 24 Charles Rogers to Meigs, 1 February 1808, M–208.
 - 25 Brainerd Journal, 2 June 1818, Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
 - 26 Jefferson to Hawkins, 18 February 1803, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, 10 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1892–99), 8: 213–14.
 - 27 Meigs to Hawkins, 13 Feb. 1805, M–208.
 - 28 Draft of Jefferson’s Fifth Annual Message, Ford, 8: 394.

- 29 Norton, 36, 59–60.
- 30 Yet some men treasured the President's advice even if, perhaps, they did not follow it. One of the headmen of Chota treasured a copy of Washington's letter which agent Dinsmore had bound and given him. Williams, *Early Travels*, 469–471, 485, 490.
- 31 Goodwin (p. 135) suggests that the Cherokees did not keep livestock because they believed that by consuming beef and pork, they would acquire the slow, slovenly characteristics of the animals.
- 32 William L. McDowell, ed., *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750–Aug. 7, 1754* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives, 1958), 82.
- 33 McDowell, *Documents, 1750–1754*, 29; William L. McDowell, ed., *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754–1765* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives, 1970), 127, 144, 168; Williams, *Early Travels*, 140n; Timberlake, 72.
- 34 James Adair, *Adair's History of the American Indians* (Johnson City, TN: Watauga Press, 1930), 443.
- 35 Williams, *Early Travels*, 481–83.
- 36 "Reflections on the Institutions of the Cherokee Indians," *The Analectic Magazine* (July 1818), 39.
- 37 Hawkins, 18, 24.
- 38 Receipts to Samuel Eckridge, 19 Oct. 1802, M–208.
- 39 Daniel Alexander to Meigs, 22 Feb 1805, M–208.
- 40 "Reflections," 41.
- 41 Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography; or a View of the Present State of All the Kingdoms, States and Colonies in the Known World* (Boston: Thomas and Andrews, 1812), 574.
- 42 Norton, 57.
- 43 Daniel S. Butrick to Samuel Austin Worcester, 2 July 1818; Ard Hoyt to Jeremiah Evarts, 8 January 1819; ABCFM.
- 44 Doublehead to J. D. Chilsolm, 20 November 1802, M–208.
- 45 Butrick to Worcester, 2 July 1818, ABCFM.
- 46 For example, see Abstract of Indemnification for Horses Stolen, 27 Oct. 1801, Meigs to Dearborn, 22 Feb. 1802, and List of Claims, 25 Oct. 1811, M–208. The Indians enjoyed sovereignty under the supervision of the federal government, but their lack of jurisdiction over whites and the absence of formal laws meant that the prosecution of whites was unlikely. The states, on the other hand, usually refused to admit Native testimony, and so the federal government attempted to intercede to prevent Indians' being tried in state courts.

- 47 Meigs to Dearborn, 19 Dec. 1807, M-208.
- 48 William G. McLoughlin, "Cherokee Anomie, 1794-1810," in *The Cherokee Ghost Dance: Essays on the Southeastern Indians, 1789-1861* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 3-37.
- 49 Williams, *Early Travels*, 460; Hawkins, 133.
- 50 Meigs to Cherokee Nation, 14 Aug. 1807; J. D. Chilsolm to Meigs, 19 Aug 1807; James Lusk to Gov. Sevier, 9 Dec. 1807; List of Claims, 25 Oct. 1811; M-208.
- 51 Black Fox & other chiefs to George Parris & Killachulla, 23 Aug. 1807, M-208.
- 52 Thomas McKenney, *Memoirs Official and Personal; with Sketches of Travels among the Northern and Southern Indians*, 2 vols. (New York: Paine and Burgess, 1846), 1: 232-33.
- 53 A.O. Aldridge, "Franklin's Letter on Indians and Germans [1753]," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 94 (1950): 392.
- 54 McKenney, *Memoirs*, 1: 232-33.
- 55 Ann Paine to Evarts, 8 November 1821, ABCFM.
- 56 Moody Hall's Journal, 17 April 1822, 17 April 1823, ABCFM.
- 57 Norton, 36, 59-60.
- 58 Journal of Occurences in the Cherokee Agency in 1802, M-208.
- 59 John Lowry to Meigs, 20 Oct. 1818; Names of Persons who are on land in Sequchee Valley, 22 April 1809; William Schrimsher and Richard Martins recommendation as croppers for Jn. Boggs, a Cherokee, 21 April 1808; M-208. All people mentioned as employers of sharecroppers were men except for Granny Maw and Nancy Meigs to Chiefs, 27 March 1810, M-208.
- 60 Meigs to Chulisa & Sour Mush, 14 March 1808, M-208.
- 61 Meigs to William Eustis, 27 February 1811, M-208.
- 62 See R. Halliburton, Jr., *Red Over Black: Black Slavery among the Cherokee Indians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977) and Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979).
- 63 Joseph Phillips to Meigs, 12 Aug. 1807; Complaint of Griffin Minor, 5 May 1809; M-208.
- 64 John Howard Payne Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL, 7: 58-59.
- 65 Morse, *Geography*, 574.

- 66 By 1835 nearly sixteen hundred residents of the Cherokee Nation were slaves, but less than eight percent of the heads of household listed on this census owned slaves. Those who did were wealthy in every category listed on the census: they farmed more acres, raised more corn and wheat per acre, sold more of their produce, and owned a disproportionate number of mills and ferries. Twenty of the 209 slaveholders listed on the census (slightly over one tenth) were women, but they were not as wealthy as the men. Women slaveholders averaged slightly over six slaves each while men averaged slightly over seven. Unlike their male counterparts, women slaveholders concentrated their assets in farming: none owned a mill or ferry, and almost all had only one farm. Cherokee Census of 1835 (Henderson Roll), Record Group 75, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Microcopy T-496.
- 67 Hawkins, 22–23.
- 68 Little Turkey to Meigs, 10 Dec. 1801; Upper Town Chiefs to the President, 25 April 1806; The Glass to Meigs, 8 Feb. 1808; M-208.
- 69 Bartlett Robbins was a white man “living in the Cherokee Nation with Nancy Falling,” and Burns, who was married to Cherokee Aky Lowry, may well have been white because Lovely suggests that he would be “a good example to the Indians.” William L. Lovely to Meigs, 30 Jan. 1804; Statement of Bartlett Robbins, 25 Oct. 1808; M-208.
- 70 Little Turkey to Meigs, 10 Dec. 1801; Journal of Occurrences in the Cherokee Agency, 1802; List of Tools, etc., 28 May 1806; Dearborn to Meigs, 24 April 1807; Meigs to Eustis, 15 Dec. 1810; M-208.
- 71 Meigs to John Cocke, 7 April 1803; Meigs to Eustis, 15 Dec. 1810; M-208.
- 72 Meigs to Eustis, 10 May 1811, M-208. Plows were not evenly distributed throughout the Nation. Lower towns in Georgia and Alabama received more than the Upper Towns in eastern Tennessee or the Valley Towns in western North Carolina. John Tinsley complained to Meigs that only one family in seven in his neighborhood had a plow. 10 June 1811, M-208.
- 73 The Church at Willstown, 10 Oct. 1828, ABCFM.
- 74 Butrick’s Journal, 19 February 1824; Butrick to Evarts, 9 May 1827; ABCFM.
- 75 Brainerd Journal, 22 April 1820, 5 November 1821, ABCFM.
- 76 Journal of the Church at Willstown, 10 October 1828, ABCFM.
- 77 Albert Gallatin, “Synopsis of the Indian Tribes Within the United States East of the Rocky Mountains, and in the British and Russian Possessions,” *Archaeologia Americana: Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Folsom, Wells, and Thurston, 1836), 108.
- 78 Gallatin, 157.
- 79 Hawkins, 21–22.

- 80 Hawkins, 18.
- 81 Hawkins, 21.
- 82 Meigs to Black Fox, 29 August 1808, M-208.
- 83 Muscle Shoals Chiefs to Return J. Meigs, 27 March 1804, M-208.
- 84 Non-Indians living west of the continental divide had similar problems marketing their produce. Some resorted to making whiskey from their grain in order to simplify transport to market. The Cherokees, however, had no tradition of fermenting and distilling grain.
- 85 Williams, *Early Travels*, 464; Norton, 125.
- 86 Morse, *Geography*, 574.
- 87 Meigs reported that in 1801 weavers produced six hundred yards of cloth on one loom at Hiwassee. If weavers averaged that level of productivity, the total yards produced would be 280,200. Journal of Occurrences &c. relating to the Cherokee Nation [1801], M-208.
- 88 Thomas Johnson to Genl. Winchester, 20 April 1801, M-208.
- 89 Meigs to Israel Wheeler, 21 Nov. 1801, M-208. By the 1820s, those ostrich feathers at which the chiefs had sneered in 1801 had become so desirable that a case contesting ownership of them reached the Cherokee Supreme Court. Betsey Walker vs. Chekayoue, 24 Oct. 1827, Cherokee Supreme Court Docket, Tennessee State Archives, Nashville, TN.
- 90 Ann Paine, Notebook II, 20 Dec. 1820, ABCFM.
- 91 Brainerd Journal, 14 Dec. 1822, ABCFM.
- 92 Little Turkey to Meigs, 10 Dec. 1807; Black Foxes Speech, 25 Feb. 1804; James Davis, Chief of Tusquitee, to Meigs 29 July 1804; M-208. One man, the Bold Hunter, learned to make looms. Journal of Occurrences &c. relating to the Cherokee Nation [1801], M-208.
- 93 Pathkiller and Toochee to Meigs, 14 Sept. 1812, M-208.
- 94 Doublehead to Meigs, 8 June 1804, M-208.
- 95 Receipts to Samuel Eckridge, 19 Oct. 1802, M-208.
- 96 Receipt to Nancy Lin, 22 Aug. 1802; Receipt to Susannah Trembel, 23 July 1802; Receipt to Nancy Davis, 8 Sept. 1802; M-208.
- 97 Hawkins, 360.
- 98 List of white men permitted to assist the Cherokees in 1811, An agreement between Doublehead & John Smith, Jr., 16 Nov. 1805. M-208.

- 99 Meigs to Hawkins, 28 Dec. 1802; Resolutions of the National Council, 10 April 1804, M-208.
- 100 Resolutions of the National Council, 10 April 1804; Lovely to Meigs 4 Nov. 1803; Meigs to Col Walter, 10 Jan 1804; Charles Hicks to Meigs, 19 Aug. 1806; John Lowry to Meigs, 22 March 1807; M-208.
- 101 Meigs to Eustis, 1 Dec. 1809, M-208.
- 102 Meigs to Eustis, 1 Dec. 1809, M-208.
- 103 Nicholas Byers to Meigs, 28 Aug. 1805, M-208.
- 104 Meigs to Eustis, 1 Dec. 1809, M-208.
- 105 Meigs to Lovely [1801], M-208.
- 106 Dearborn to Meigs, 9 July 1801; Meigs to Dearborn, 8 June 1802; Meigs to Dearborn, 31 May 1804; Lovely to Chiefs, June 1805; M-208.
- 107 Meigs to Eustis, 1 Dec. 1809, M-208.

Hawai'i

An Occupied Country

Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua

One hundred and twenty years have passed since the United States Marines were deployed to support a coup by a small group of sugar businessmen against the democratically elected, Native-led, independent government of Hawai'i. Presently, the Hawaiian struggle to end what is considered, in international law, a prolonged military occupation continues. It has been one hundred and twenty years since US President Grover Cleveland told Congress that its military and diplomatic representatives had committed an "act of war" against a country with which the US had numerous treaties of friendship and commerce. Today, the Hawaiian people still maintain that our sovereignty endures.



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These facts, however, are little known to most Americans and the eight million people who visit Hawai'i each year. Though people around the world see the Hawaiian Islands as a tourist destination and a site for real estate investment, few are aware of the on-going dispute over political sovereignty and land.

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By the late-1800s, the independent Hawaiian Kingdom government was recognized by all the major powers of the world. A member of the Universal Postal Union, the Hawaiian Kingdom government established over ninety legations and consulates in multiple cities around the world. Comprised of a multiethnic

citizenry in which aboriginal people—Kanaka Maoli—were the majority, the Hawaiian Kingdom had its own national school system and boasted a literacy rate as high, if not higher, than all the major world powers of the time.

The onset of prolonged US occupation that began in 1898 abruptly halted the growth of Hawaiian national life. Control of the national land base was wrested from the Hawaiian Kingdom. The Hawaiian language was also banned and for most of the 20th century, Hawai'i did not have a single school that made the Native Hawaiian language or culture central to its curriculum. Stories of Hawaiian resistance to American takeover were hidden and overwritten by American historical narratives and fabricated to make people believe there was a legal merger between the Hawaiian Kingdom and the United States. In fact, no such treaty was ever ratified.

Roughly 1.8 million acres of Hawaiian national lands were seized by the US in 1898, and not a single acre has been returned to Hawaiian sovereign control. The stifling of Hawaiian legal and political sovereignty continues to have all sorts of harmful effects on Kanaka Maoli. In 1983, the first two major studies on the status of Native Hawaiians were completed: the Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment project and the Native Hawaiian Study Commission report. Both showed that Kanaka Maoli had the highest rates of family poverty, incarceration, academic underachievement (including drop-out and absentee rates) and various negative health indicators. These such "health indicators" included behavioral health such as suicide and depression. Data gathered in the first decade of the 2000s show that these statistics remain largely unchanged thirty years later.¹ This is why issues of land and sovereignty remain so urgent.

Land and Sovereignty Struggles: Two Streams

The vast majority of the lands controlled by the US federal government and the State of Hawai'i are the Hawaiian Kingdom's Crown and Government lands that were seized at the start of the US occupation in the 1890s. Of the four million acres that make up the islands, 1.8 million comprise

these two classes of seized Hawaiian national lands. Under US control, the two separate inventories of lands became co-mingled.

Just over twenty years later, the US government threw a crumb toward the benefit of native Hawaiians. In 1921, the US Congress set aside 200,000 acres for a beneficiary class defined by a 50 percent blood quantum. Thus the statute came to define “native Hawaiian” in those fractionalizing terms. In 1959, the US federal government transferred the remainder of lands that were not reserved for US military usage or for the Hawaiian Homelands trust to the newly formed State of Hawai'i.

These lands are frequently referred to as the “ceded lands,” a moniker which many Kanaka Maoli oppose, since the lands were illegally seized from, rather than legally transferred by, the Hawaiian Kingdom.

In post-World War II Hawai'i, hotels and resorts replaced sugar plantations. Newly built luxury homes and suburban sprawl accommodated the rush of US American settlers in the years after 1959. These “developments” displaced people who continued to live “Hawaiian style,” relying on land-based subsistence practices like fishing, gathering and farming. Multiethnic working class communities began to challenge the unfulfilled commitments of a post-WWII, local political establishment that had risen to power on promises of land reform. In addition to anti-eviction movements, struggles were waged against the continued use and destruction of Hawaiian lands by the US military. Out of these diverse land struggles, a Hawaiian cultural and political nationalist consciousness re-emerged.

Over the next few decades, two parallel streams of thought developed within the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. One sought some measure of justice within existing structures of the US government. This has included a “nation-within-a-nation” approach, which seeks US federal recognition of a domestic-dependent, “reorganized” and ethnically defined Hawaiian nation. The other stream fundamentally questioned the jurisdiction of the US in Hawai'i, invoking fundamental



A “native Hawaiian” in a traditional lei and headdress on the Washington Mall during the grand opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

principals of international law and emphasizing the independence of Hawai'i as a country unto itself.

The “nation within a nation” stream of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement grew out of a pragmatic desire to uplift Native Hawaiian people by accessing collective resources held by the settler state. In the late-1970s, the Council of Hawaiian Organizations and Alu Like sponsored a series of meetings that brought together hundreds of representatives of different Hawaiian associations. The sessions produced many ideas about how to improve the collective conditions of the Hawaiian people. One strand emphasized holding the State government accountable to its legal mandate to use the public lands under its control to benefit Hawaiians.

A fiery leader from Waianae, Adelaide “Frenchy” DeSoto, represented her district in the 1978 Hawai'i State Constitutional Convention and became the chair of the Hawaiian Affairs committee. She championed the initiative to create an office within the State's system that is intended to receive 20 percent of the revenues from the Public Lands Trust (since the betterment of native Hawaiians is one of five purposes laid out in the Admissions Act). As a result, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) was established in 1978 to utilize the income derived from the Public Lands for the benefit of native Hawaiians and to have ownership of any property conveyed to that entity.

“One thing that both independence and nation-within-a-nation advocates have always agreed upon is the need to build a broad, popular movement of educated Hawaiians who can then exercise their right to informed self-determination.”

At the same time though, many K naka were concerned to push further than simply holding the settler government responsible for its historical neglect of trust responsibilities under its own laws. People began to challenge the very legitimacy of the US Federal and State of Hawai'i governments on Hawaiian soil in the first place.

The same year that OHA was established, attorney Pōkā Laenui challenged US jurisdiction in his 1978 motion to dismiss a case brought by the State of Hawai'i against Wilford “Nappy” Pulawa. Whereas OHA was founded to work within the settler state system, Laenui was arguing: “We are not American citizens, we are citizens of the nation of Hawai'i, and we refuse to dignify the court by entering a plea.”² Beyond the courts, protests at specific sites brought to light the buried history of the Hawaiian Kingdom lands. For instance, anti-eviction protesters at Sand Island in 1980 pointed out that the “ceded lands” were in fact stolen Hawaiian lands. After their arrest for resisting the State's eviction of Sand Island residents in 1980, Puhipau and his two brothers, Bobby and Walter Paulo, retained Pōkā Laenui to represent them based on the argument that the US had no jurisdiction over these lands.

Over the next two decades more and more people began to remember the Hawaiian Kingdom lands as such and began referring to them as “sovereign lands,” or simply “Hawaiian lands.”



A native Hawaiian wears an American flag after protesters cut out the 50th star at a rally on the 50th anniversary of Hawaiian statehood in Honolulu advocating for an independent Hawaii.

Building consciousness about the history, status, and health of these lands provided a critical piece in the development of Hawaiian sovereignty discourse. Independence leaders that rose to prominence throughout the 1980s and 1990s, such as Kīhei Soli Niheu, Keli'i Skippy Ioane, and Kekuni Akana Blaisdell, rejected reconciliation approaches and argued for nothing less than full autonomy, recognizing the connection between the health of the people and our ability to connect to our lands.

One thing that both independence and nation-within-a-nation advocates have always agreed upon is the need to build a broad, popular movement of educated Hawaiians who can then exercise their right to informed self-determination. The massive organization of Hawaiians in the 1990s required popular education based on sound research. Not only academics but also people of all vocations were striving to remedy a century of historical miseducation, or lack thereof. This movement of informal and formal education has included community-based educational workshops, dramatic reenactments of key moments in the history of Hawaiian sovereignty, documentary films, books, marches, music, and legal cases.

In 1998, petitions documenting the mass resistance of 19th century Hawaiian citizens to US annexation were brought to light, through the research of Dr. Noenoe Silva and others. Nicknamed the “Kūē petitions,” the stacks of paper moved many toward the independence side of the sovereignty movement spectrum. Many individuals came forward to look at and touch the

signatures of their ancestors who expressed their opposition to Hawai'i's incorporation into the United States.

The petitions had been successful in helping to defeat attempts to pass a treaty of annexation through the US Congress in 1897. According to the US constitution, treaties must be ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of the Senate. The 1898 Newlands Resolution, by which the US claimed Hawai'i, was a Joint Resolution of Congress passed by a simple majority. In the 55th Congress of the United States, both chambers had a Republican majority. The House of Representatives had 357 total members, and the final vote on the Newlands Resolution was 209 in favor and 91 opposed. The Senate, after some secret debates, voted 42 to 21 with 26 senators abstaining. One will not find the Newlands Resolution on a listing of bilateral treaties to which the United States has been or is currently a party, because it is not a treaty. The Kū'e petitions helped bring this history to light and catalyzed Hawaiian movement, once again, at the dawn of the 21st century.

Independence and International Awareness

In the last two decades, Hawaiian independence supporters have made concerted efforts to remind the international community about Hawaiian national sovereignty and to generate some level of pressure on the US. The United Nations General Assembly declared 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, and that same year the Kanaka Maoli, led by Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell, convened a Peoples' International Tribunal, Ka Ho'okolokolo Nui Kanaka Maoli. It investigated the US role in obstructing Hawaiian sovereignty and in various acts of genocide against the Hawaiian nation. In their findings, the panel of nine judges called for two main actions: that the U.S. return all the Hawaiian national lands without delay to Kanaka Maoli, and that the U.S. observe the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the minimum standard in its interactions with the Hawaiian people.

Since then, the U.S. has not done either. And so the efforts to raise international awareness have continued, and have ramped up in the last two years. In August 2012, Dr. David Keanu Sai filed a Protest and Demand, on behalf of the Hawaiian Kingdom, with the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The document calls all forty-six States and one hundred twenty-seven successor States who are parties to treaties with the Hawaiian Kingdom to honor their treaty relations and obligations by recognizing the United States of America's presence and authority in Hawai'i as unlawful under international law. The Protest was received and acknowledged by Dr. Hanifa Mezoui of the Office of the UNGA President. The Protest was also acknowledged by the Executive Secretary of the G-77, the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations, and by the Executive Secretary of the Council of Presidents, a think tank of former Presidents of the United Nations that advise the sitting President of the General Assembly.

Most recently, in June 2013, a Hawaiian delegation carried a similar message about Hawaii's political history to Indigenous allies from around the world gathered in Alta, Norway. Representatives of Indigenous nations from every region in the world had gathered for an international preparatory meeting for the UN World Conference on Indigenous People (WCIP) to be held in 2014. The WCIP will not be a conference of Indigenous people but rather of high-level plenary meeting UNGA member states talking about Indigenous people. Thus, the Alta meeting was an opportunity for Indigenous leaders to come together and put forward a document representing Indigenous voices for the upcoming WCIP.

Attorney and Hawaiian representative, Dexter Ke'eaumoku Ka'iama carried a communiqué (quoted in the epigraph of this article) asserting the continuity of Hawaiian political independence despite on-going US occupation. The Hawaiian statement was signed by 190 people who identify as Hawaiian nationals—citizens of independent Hawai'i—including community leaders, former elected officials, public school teachers, librarians, filmmakers, accountants, peace facilitators, tradesmen, academics, and attorneys. The Hawaiian statement at Alta is evidence of at least two things: the on-going struggle for Hawaiian land and sovereignty, and the ambivalent relationship that Hawaiians today have with the category "Indigenous."

This is because settler states such as the US, Canada and Australia have consistently worked to confine Indigenous self-determination to a limited level of self-governance over internal affairs but perpetually subordinate to the settler's sovereignty.

The Limits of State-defined Indigeneity

Following the "nation-within-a-nation" approach that mirrors tribal governance within Indian Country, the State of Hawai'i's U.S. congressional delegation has pushed for US federal recognition of Native Hawaiians. The "Akaka bill," or Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, has been introduced into the US Senate each year since 2000. However, it has never passed, and in the last decade no hearing on the legislation has ever been held in Hawai'i. The legislation defines Native Hawaiians as "indigenous, native people of the United States" and maintains that the US has legitimate sovereignty over the Hawaiian archipelago—a claim which Hawaiian historians, political scientists and activists have now challenged for years.

Since federal recognition legislation has been unsuccessful, Hawai'i State lawmakers made a move toward state-level recognition with the passage of Act 195 in 2011. While Sai was delivering the aforementioned Petition and Demand to the UN in the summer of 2012, Hawai'i State Governor Neil Abercrombie and the Native Hawaiian Roll Commission (created by Act 195) were launching an initiative to create a base roll of Native Hawaiians. This roll will be a registry of individuals who will be eligible to participate in the formation of "a reorganized Native Hawaiian governing entity."



Thousands of native Hawaiians and local supporters carry large Hawaii state flags as they march for “Ku I Ka Pono” of “justice for Hawaiians”.

The terms “reorganized governing entity” and “reorganization” have a specific history within US law dating back to the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. After a period of ignoring all treaties with Indian nations, “reorganization” allowed for limited self-governance under US plenary power. The reorganized governing entities were not modeled on Indigenous forms of governance but rather on American-styled bureaucratic and representative forms. The terms “self-governance” and “self-determination” also have a specific history and meaning in US law.

The difference between “governance” or “governing entity” and “government” are crucial. Native “self-governance” or “self-determination,” in US legal terms, typically includes a limited form of governance that can, but does not necessarily,

include taxation on tribal lands, enforcement of civil and criminal law on tribal lands, and licensing and regulating activities on those lands. The relationship between the tribe and the state varies from case to case.

If the Native Hawaiian registry is successful, there is no guarantee that US federal recognition will be forthcoming, since such recognition is contingent upon the political winds of the time. Additionally, the state-level enrollment effort has struggled because people are unsure of what exactly is at stake. Like the 1993 Apology Bill passed by the US Congress, the State’s Act 195 does not put any lands or specific rights on the table. Initiatives, such as Act 195, that are geared toward ethnic, Indigenous Hawaiians within the framework of US domestic law, do not address a major issue: the Hawaiian Kingdom was an internationally-recognized, multi-ethnic country, in which Kanaka Maoli were the majority but not the only citizen subjects.

The question remains: what obligations do the US and the State of Hawai’i have with respect to Kanaka Maoli and Hawaiian sovereignty? Land is, and always will be, the crux of the issue. Whether a formal process of deoccupation or decolonization is undertaken, the US and State of Hawai’i must commit to transferring back the lands that originally belonged to and were illegally seized from the Hawaiian Kingdom. Since such a process would likely take many years if not decades, in the meantime the settler state has an obligation to create as many opportunities as possible for Kanaka Maoli and other Hawaiian nationals to reconnect with lands

for cultural, ceremonial, subsistence and educational purposes. Moreover, these lands should not be transferred, further built upon, or exploited until the Hawaiian national claims to them are settled.

Notes

- 1 For instance, a 2010 study on “The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System” documented the ways disparate treatment of Native Hawaiians is apparent at every stage in the criminal justice system from arrest through parole. The biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shows that year after year Native Hawaiian high school students attempt suicide at least twice as often as non-Hawaiian students, and Native Hawaiian high school females are raped at roughly twice the rate of non-Hawaiians. As compared with non-Hawaiian students in Hawai'i and all public high school students in the U.S., Native Hawaiian youth have the highest rates of self-reported drug use and almost all other high-risk behaviors measured on the survey.
- 2 Quoted and discussed in Vogeler, “Outside Shagri La: Colonization and the US Occupation of Hawai'i” in *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land and Sovereignty*. Goodyear- Ka 'ōpua, Hussey and Wright, eds. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Fiji's Forgotten People

The Legatees of 'Blackbirding'¹

Hilary Summy

'Most people both outside and inside Fiji are unfamiliar with the background of Fiji Melanesians. The reason for this has perhaps more to do with imperial expediency than accidental oversight. This article draws attention to the plight of this neglected and historically deprived ethnic minority group and examines events that led to its underprivileged status. It reports the well-intentioned but misguided past role of the Anglican Church in assisting the Melanesians. It also investigates recent attempts to improve their dire circumstances through the work of the self-organising Fiji Melanesian Community Development Association.'

Introduction

When considering the topic of indentured, or contract, labour in colonial Fiji, Indians immediately come to mind. However, little is known about immigrant Melanesian labourers who preceded the Indians' arrival. The Melanesians, known as 'Polynesians' by the colonials, were the most significant source of plantation labour from their introduction in 1864 until the 1880s when they were gradually outnumbered by Indians in the sugarcane industry. The Melanesians continued to arrive until 1911, working mainly on coconut plantations and in urban development. Their descendants are today known as Fiji Melanesians² and they number around 12,000

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(Seke interview of Jo Sanegar, 2009) in a total Fiji population of over 800,000 (2007 Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics).

Much has been written about the labour trade in the Pacific and the milieu in which it operated. While most historians agree that the early years of recruitment for the plantation industry were marked by unscrupulous methods, there is much debate about the extent of voluntarism as opposed to force or deception throughout the period. While the term 'blackbirding'³ implies the latter, 'revisionist' historians⁴ argue that kidnapping was the exception rather than the rule and that Pacific Islanders were willing participants in the labour trade. Regardless of the differing views, the system itself was based on 'structural violence',⁵ if not overt or physical violence. The Fiji Melanesians themselves use the term 'blackbirding.' Many insist their forefathers had been kidnapped. For them it signifies more than a method of recruitment; it symbolizes a legacy of pain, a sense of loss and deep shame.

Background

As occurred in colonial Queensland and other settler societies in the Pacific region, the plantation system was crucial to the economic development of Fiji. Its success, however, depended on an ample supply of cheap labour. Since the availability of indigenous Fijians was not sufficient to meet the demand, planters turned to adjacent islands in Melanesia—predominantly the New Hebrides, Solomon Islands and, to a lesser extent, outlying islands of New Guinea, and Kiribati in Micronesia.⁶ From 1864 until Pacific Island indenture ceased in Fiji in 1911, approximately 27,027 contracts were entered into, either voluntarily or involuntarily (Siegel 1985, 47).⁷

A depot in Levuka—Fiji's then commercial centre on Ovalau island—was the official destination for new recruits during the early phase of the trade. They were then allotted to the planters, who paid for their passage, and were put to work on plantations scattered mostly around the coastal areas of Ovalau, Viti Levu, Taveuni and Rabi. According to an oral source, some recruiting ships made stops at plantations to 'sell' their human cargo directly to the planters rather than go through the official channels. In some instances family members were separated and names changed so that they could not be traced.⁸ Since there was little regulation of the trade before cession to the British in 1874 the system was subject to abuse (Shlomowitz 1986, 117–8). Contracts were mostly for a period of three years at a minimum annual wage of £3 (Parnaby 1956, 57; Shlomowitz 1986, 111). At the end of the contract period some labourers stayed on for additional terms, while most were supposedly returned to their home island at the employer's expense. Repatriation did not always occur, however, especially after the collapse of the cotton boom. Cotton had dominated Fiji's plantation industry from the mid 1860s after the American Civil War had disrupted supplies from the American South. The boom came to an end with a decline in demand when traditional

supplies were resumed. This contributed to a financial crisis in Fiji during 1873-4 that bankrupted many planters. Many Melanesians were left stranded without a wage or return passage, until Governor Arthur Gordon was forced to Intervene (Parnaby 1956, 61-2). At the same time Gordon encouraged further recruitment from Melanesia to provide labour for the burgeoning sugarcane industry, although he soon turned to India for a more dependable source. While Indian labour predominated in the sugar industry from the early 1880s, the Melanesians were redeployed on coconut plantations, copra having emerged as a staple industry along with sugar.

The authoritarian and coercive nature of plantation life has been well documented (Munro 1993, 11-19; Corris 1973, 70-3; Parnaby 1972, 140; Frazer 1981, 105-114). As well as outright violence by some owners and managers, living conditions were substandard, long hours were expected and food was often limited and of poor quality. Medical facilities proved insufficient to cope with frequent illnesses which, along with a lack of preventative measures, undoubtedly caused many unnecessary deaths. However, as Schlomowitz has noted (1986, 110), the extremely high death rate was due more to diseases to which the Melanesians had little immunity. Conditions did improve during the 1890s and mortality rates declined significantly, especially with the Melanesians now employed on copra plantations where the work was less arduous and where they could grow their own food (Corris 1973, 73-4).

While most Melanesians returned to their home islands, a growing number stayed. Many had married Fijians which made it difficult to return to their home village.⁹ Some were reluctant to return to the restricted village life of the past. Others had little choice except to stay; they had no assurances of being returned to the precise place where they had been picked up (being returned to the wrong place could mean death), or what kind of reception awaited their return. Still others had no means of returning.

From the 1890s Melanesians who remained in Fiji gravitated towards Levuka and increasingly Suva on the Island of Viti Levu, which in 1882 had replaced Levuka as the seat of government. In 1884 there were around 300 ex-plantation workers living around these towns, but by 1908 the numbers exceeded 2,700 (*Report on Polynesian Immigration for 1884:7 and 1908:4*, cited in Halapua 1996, 293). They provided a source of ready unskilled labour. Some found jobs as road builders, construction workers, stevedores, boat's crew, domestic servants, store workers and gardeners. As their numbers increased, however, work became difficult to find. They lived with their kinsmen, mostly in makeshift dwellings on the outskirts of the towns, forgotten by the Colonial Government and left to fend for themselves. These human remnants of a bygone era fell into a state of poverty and neglect. Today they are perhaps the most marginalised and disadvantaged group in Fiji and most rely on subsistence living in squatter settlements. According to a 2003 Fiji Government report, they are the 'worst affected' minority ethnic group in Fiji (Nomae et al. 2004,1).

Land Tenure

As well as problems of unemployment and government neglect, a fundamental difficulty for the Melanesians was, and remains, the issue of land tenure. Traditionally, land and people in Fiji are bound together in the *vanua*, a concept that is integral to identity and the Fijian way of life. In an effort to guarantee the rights of Fijians to their lands, the British colonial administration appropriated the Fijian concept of *mataqali* (sub-clan or lineage). Membership of a *mataqali* is inherited patrilineally and entitles certain privileges, including land rights (Halapua 1987, 44–5). Legislation ensured that some 83 per cent of the land remained in Fijian hands. At the same time it entrenched a state of landlessness for the Melanesians (as it has for Indo-Fijians and other non-indigenous Fijians) (Chaudhary 1987, 156–7, 160, 168). Although Melanesians are similar in appearance to indigenous Fijians and have adopted their language and customs as their own—and despite the fact that most are part Fijian through marriage—their landlessness sets them apart and consigns them permanently to a low status.

The question of land tenure in Fiji is a complex one that goes beyond the scope of this article. However, it is true to say that the *vanua*, or traditional customary ways, is increasingly under pressure from western materialism (Boydell and Shah 2003, 1), and that the Melanesians are victims in this process. Essentially, there are three categories of land in Fiji that were enshrined by the British administration: First, there is Crown Land; second, Native Land which is land held in common by the *mataqali* and can only be acquired by descent; third, Freehold Land which refers to land that was bought by foreigners prior to cession but now can be purchased by anyone at considerable cost.

Most Melanesians live on land that is held by the *mataqali*. Many of the original leases were based on verbal agreements in the late 1880s or early 1900s. This arrangement has left the Melanesians in a weak position regarding their legal rights. Problems for the Melanesian settlements became apparent with the expansion of urban development and a corresponding increase in the value of land and leases. Upon expiration, a lease is often not renewed and the Melanesians are invoiced for rent they cannot afford, or the land is gradually whittled away through subdivision in the interests of commercial development (Halapua 2001, 91–110). A number of settlers has already been forced to relocate (several times in some cases), the latest casualty being those at Namara settlement in Taclua East, Suva, where some families have lived for over a hundred years. These squatters have been given the option of buying plots of land in the settlement for around \$AUD13,000, but this is not really an option for people living below the poverty line, unless they can secure financial assistance (Seke Interview of Jo Sanegar, 2009). The only settlements with security of tenure for the Melanesians are those owned by the Anglican Church. Of the forty Melanesian settlements only four are on land owned or leased by the Church.

Role of Anglican Church

With the absence of assistance from the Colonial Government, the Anglican Church took up the cause of Melanesian poverty. Reverend William Floyd arrived in Levuka in 1870 to serve the pastoral needs of the Anglican settlers. His work was sanctioned by the Bishops of Melbourne and Sydney since many of the settlers had come from their respective Dioceses. When the Colony's Chief Justice drew attention to the plight of the Melanesians it seemed natural for Floyd to include them in his mission (Halapua 2001, 45, 47). The Wesleyans and Roman Catholics also attempted to establish influence among the Melanesians and made some converts (Corns 1973, 93), but the Anglican Church and Floyd prevailed for the most part.

Floyd's first major undertaking was to take out a lease on eleven acres of land to establish a settlement for the Melanesians, known as Wallallal (Halapua 2001, 45, 47). A small school was built to provide an education for Melanesian children who were barred from government schools. By the early 1960s overcrowding, poor sanitation and lack of water at Wallallal, as well as uncertainties surrounding the lease, led to the purchase by the Diocese of Polynesia of 460 acres of freehold land some nine miles from Levuka Town, known as Walnaloka. However, a new lifestyle based on farming required major readjustments and much of the land was unsuitable in any case. Some felt there had been a lack of dialogue in purchasing the property and chose to stay at Wallallal with the conveniences of living close to town, despite uncertainties about the lease's renewal. (Tapu 1987, 30-33).

Similar missionary work occurred in Suva as the numbers of impoverished Melanesians increased on the fringes of the town. A school was established, and a hostel to provide accommodation for the students. A major project was the establishment in 1941 of a large settlement at Walloku on land leased by the Church to centralize the numerous scattered Melanesian communities. The majority of Melanesians, however, preferred to remain with their kinship groups in the original settlements (Halapua 2001, 74-5).

Another attempt at centralising the Melanesians was the establishment in 1964 of a settlement at Navlavla, Vanua Levu, on a copra estate owned by the Anglican Church. The original idea was to relocate Melanesians throughout Vanua Levu, as well as in Levuka, to the new settlement. However, the Church met with some resistance, especially from older Melanesians at Levuka who did not want to be uprooted. (Halapua 2001, 90, fn.1). The Church provided funds for a primary school at the new settlement, but the considerable distance to Labasa on the other side of the island made further education difficult if not impossible. The remoteness of the settlement also made jobs especially difficult to find so that the villagers depended on subsistence farming, a situation that continues today.

Despite some drawbacks, the contribution of the Anglican Church to the Melanesians' welfare has been considerable. On the other hand, their efforts have not paid off in terms of Melanesian self-development and independence. The Church establishment today concedes that its legacy is mixed (Bryce, 2008). Rather than addressing the root cause of Melanesian deprivation

and hardship, the Church paternalistically took on the role of guardianship and unwittingly aggravated problems of social alienation, poverty and unemployment. Bringing people together from different clans and regional areas and putting them together into centralized settlements demonstrated little understanding of their needs. The adoption of the Fijian language and customs disconnected the immigrants from their roots, resulting in a loss of identity and purpose. Their marginalisation and disempowerment were reinforced by a lack of educational opportunities which severely inhibited their prospects for advancement in mainstream society. The first generation was almost entirely illiterate, while the Church schools provided only a limited educational environment for the second and subsequent generations (Halapua 2001, 63,124).

These problems are still very real within the Melanesian settlements. According to a 2004 study of six settlements around Suva, about fifty per cent of the population has attended primary school only, forty per cent has acquired lower secondary school education, while only seven per cent had achieved higher secondary education (Nomae et al. 2004,10-11). Few have the opportunity of a tertiary education. Multi-ethnic scholarships are difficult to attain as Melanesians compete with Indians, whose population far exceeds that of the Melanesians and who generally have a head start in educational standards (Abong, 2009). A growing, but still tiny, number of Melanesians hold a university degree which allows them to make career choices and integrate into the wider community. The Anglican Church continues to be involved in the welfare of the Melanesian settlements, mitigating problems of poverty and homelessness. For example, it has provided relief for flood victims and set up a fund to buy land when leases expire so that evicted Melanesians have somewhere to live (Lomaloma 2008). While its past efforts have not always addressed the deeper causes of poverty and despair, the Church is now encouraging Melanesians to take initiatives (Bryce 2008).

Fiji Melanesian Community Development Association:

A Search for Empowerment and Identity

The Fiji Melanesian Community Development Association (FMCDCA) represents a move away from the Anglican Church's traditional top-down approach. It was formed in 1988 by Fiji Melanesians to promote and foster the best interests of their community, regardless of religious affiliation or regional origins. The community is well represented with two members from each settlement elected to serve on the Executive Council. The Anglican Vicar at each of the settlements leased by the Trustees of the Diocese of Polynesia is entitled to ex-officio membership. The Association stresses good communication and regular visits are made to the various scattered settlements. Significantly, it provides leadership and acts as a conduit between the Melanesian community and the Government. For example, it is currently negotiating with Government authorities for assistance for the Melanesians at the Namara settlement regarding their enforced relocation (Nunu 2009).

The FMCDA was created on a tide of national social and political upheaval that brought to the fore issues of race and identity. The 1987 defeat of the long-entrenched Alliance Party by the Fiji Labour Party/National Federation Party Coalition on a platform of social democratic change unleashed a storm of anger and resentment by reactionary forces that led to the formation of the militant Taukei Movement. Its leaders incited fears that indigenous Fijians would become powerless in their own country. The Indian population was the main target of racial slurs and violence, but minority communities also suffered threats of violence (Robie 1989, 230). As is well-known, the campaign of destabilisation led to Fiji's first military coup one month after the election, staged by Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka. Hopes for a real multiracial Fiji were completely dashed after Rabuka's second military takeover and revocation of the 1970 constitution (Robie 1987, 213–217; Lal 2006, 49–50).

Amplifying Melanesian concerns was their transfer from the Fijian rolls to the General rolls under the new constitution. They had previously voted in elections as Fijians under Fiji's unique racially-based political system. Now their Fijian status was removed and they were forced to join the ranks of other minorities (Europeans, part-Europeans, other Pacific Islanders, Chinese and Eurasians) (Fraenkel 1987, 26; Kuva, nd, 30). These events formed the background of the FMCDA's formation and acted as a catalyst for urgent action.

The FMCDA's objectives emphasise a spirit of respect and cooperation within the Melanesian community in recognition of the need for cohesion. Also considered important is the strengthening of a sense of identity within a multiracial society. Human needs scholars argue that the need for identity is deeply ingrained in human nature and that it provides the means of self-recognition and self-esteem. Group identity is equally important and, although it may limit individual identity, it also serves as a means of promoting that identity (Burton 1997, 36–7; Burton 1996, 30–31). An important means of establishing identity is telling stories that connect with family roots, customs and ancestral homelands, as well as reviving original cultures through music and theatre. Encouragement is given by the FMCDA in all these enterprises.

A top priority for the FMCDA is the need for a high standard of education for all Melanesians since it is regarded as providing the only means to escape the poverty trap. Those who have managed to finish high school and achieve tertiary training are testament to the possibilities that are opened. For this to become a reality for more Melanesians there needs to be outside funding which is unlikely to come from the Government, especially in the present critical economic environment. Raising funds is an important part of FMCDA's agenda for educational, health and legal needs, as well as community maintenance and development. While assistance with basic needs and upkeep of the settlements is a central concern for the FMCDA, ultimately it would like to see the end of the settlements and the integration of the Melanesians into the broader community. This long term goal presumes the self-empowerment of Melanesians and an equality of opportunity. This may seem unrealistic, but any incremental change in the process must be considered a step in the right direction. It may also appear to contradict the idea of group identity. However, group identity is a necessary first step to self-identity which evolves

with time and circumstances. Inevitably Fijian-ness will become more pronounced, but this does not necessarily mean forgetting one's heritage. Identity, after all, is forged in historical memory.

Conclusion

The history of the treatment of Melanesians in Fiji is a shameful one. They have been victims of structural violence from the beginning, imposed by the planters, the Colonial administration, the Anglican Church (though unwittingly), and an independent Fiji with its racially-based political and social system (itself a legacy of colonial racial thinking). All societies and institutions have degrees of structural violence, but the Melanesians have suffered unnecessarily through racial discrimination, social and economic marginalisation, substandard education, low salaries, lack of employment opportunities, health facilities and personal and economic development. They are little better off today than they were a century ago. Unlike their counterparts in Queensland, they have never received official recognition of their contribution to the plantation industry, or their hard labour in developing Fiji's basic infrastructure. While the outlook may be grim, there are some reasons for hope. First, the FMCD has brought leadership and cohesion. It has helped alleviate some of the problems affecting basic human needs. It has raised funds for development and promoted an awareness of problems faced by the Melanesians. Importantly, it has access to Government representatives, although with a downward-spiraling economy the Government is not in a position currently to be of much financial assistance.¹¹

Second, the *Peoples' Charter for Change, Peace and Progress*—an initiative of President Josefa Iloilo and backed by self-appointed prime minister and military chief Frank Bainimarama—is committed to a non-racial, united and 'truly democratic' Fiji. The FMCD supports the Charter since it promises to rectify some longstanding injustices. The incorporation of its principles and policies has not yet occurred. Also of concern is the milieu in which the changes are to take place in view of Bainimarama's past and present undemocratic proclivities. Gandhi's words are perhaps of relevance in this respect. He said: 'There is no way to peace; Peace is the way.' For the Fijians, especially the Fiji Melanesians, the substitution of the word 'democracy' in place of 'peace' in Gandhi's adage would also be apt. A real democracy cannot exist without racial equality and non-discriminatory opportunities. Equally important is a democratic process in achieving these goals, but the electoral means cannot become viable until racial attitudes have changed.

Notes

- 1 I thank Volker Boege, Lesley Bryant, Rupeni Oli and Ralph Summy for valuable comments on the draft. Thanks also to a number of people in Fiji for their time, hospitality, generosity and stories. However, views expressed and any errors are, of course, the responsibility of the author.

- 2 Previously known as the 'Solomoni', the descendants prefer the more inclusive name 'Melanesian'.
- 3 Strictly speaking 'blackbirding' means the practice of kidnapping and transporting Pacific Islanders to provide cheap labour for colonial capitalist enterprises.
- 4 Canberra-based historians Dorothy Shineberg, Deryck Scarr and Peter Corris paved the way in the late 1960s and early 1970s for a 'revisionist' view that highlighted the active and willing participation of Pacific Islanders in the labour trade. Subsequently, historians have approached the subject from a variety of perspectives so that it is difficult to detect any particular trend (Moore 1992,62-3).
- 5 Structural violence is violence that inheres in a society's systems and institutions, such as exploitation of disadvantaged groups. Sometimes it is incorporated in the violence associated with culture, for example, racism and other kinds of discrimination.
- 6 The vast majority of recruits came from the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) during the early phase of the labour trade. In 1870, labour recruiters moved into the Solomon Islands and by the 1890s the Solomon Islands had replaced the New Hebrides as the main source of labour for Fiji (Corris 1973, 24, 43).
- 7 Ralph Schlomowitz estimates 26,460 contracts were entered into (1986, 109).
- 8 Permission not given to identify source.
- 9 Only 8 per cent of labourers who came during the period 1876–1911 were women (Siegel 1985, 47)
- 10 A group of Solomon Islands descendants has recently formed a separate organization called the Fiji Solomon Island Descendants Association whose aim is to concentrate solely on the needs of the Solomon Islands descendants.
- 11 The FMCDAs might also need to contact outside sources for assistance, such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group or the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, whose government had expressed concern for Fiji's growing problem of squatter settlements, has been appointed to head the UNDP.

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Amy, Ichabod

Art & Lit class filing out after
another of Miz Marchaun's solos,
what the hell, a grade's a grade,
solo on keeping the imagination
fertile, that despite scientific claims
to the contrary that the moon
does rise and night fall, that there
are jewel-like constellations
in the sky and ours is among them,
one of the scholars muttering
drivel like that wasn't going to
make poets out of us, another,
Amelia or Ike, been so long
Can't remember which, chiming in,
-O-o-h, lookit the wind -

PHILIP A. WATERHOUSE,
SONOMA, CA

Reflection

- How are Native Americans represented on commercial products, in popular culture, and in the news media?
- How does the Native Hawaiian resistance to occupation in the past and present shift the dominant perceptions of Hawai'i?
- How do Hawai'i's early struggles with foreigners continue today? In what forms?

PART III

MIGRATION AND DE-COLONIZATION

Questions

- How do colonization and migration intersect? How does the shared history of US colonialism connect the Philippines, Hawai'i, and Oceania?
- How does race intersect with the ideas surrounding blackness in Hawai'i and Hawai'i's engagement with the United States?
- How does activism engage in de-colonization?
- What issues emerge when addressing solidarity between communities in Hawai'i?
- How can Oceanic ethnic studies help us envision a more just and peaceful world?

The Return of Kū?

Re-membering Hawaiian Masculinity, Warriorhood, and Nation

Ty P. Kāwika Tengan

In 1791 the chief Kamehameha erected and consecrated the massive stone temple Pu'ukoholā Heiau (on the island of Hawai'i) in order to fulfill a prophecy telling that all of Hawai'i would be his if he built a house for Kū, the god of state, male generative power, and sometimes war. By 1810 Kamehameha had unified the archipelago and established the Hawaiian Kingdom. Over the next two hundred years, though, American imperialism in the Pacific led to a prolonged settler occupation of the islands (Fujikane and Okamura 2008; Kauanui 2008a; Sai 2008; Silva 2004; Trask 1999). On the 2010 bicentennial of Hawaiian nationhood, Kānaka 'Ōiwi Maoli (Indigenous Hawaiians) lifted up new prayers for reunification and restoration. In June the last three remaining temple images of Kū stood together for the first time in nearly two hundred years at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Honolulu) when two of the statues returned to the islands from their present homes in Massachusetts and London. This special exhibit was titled *E Kū Ana Ka Paia* (The walls shall stand upright), a line from another prophecy chant that speaks of "the loss and return of the Hawaiian government through the unification of the people to form the walls of the restored nation" (Ayau and Tengan 2002:186). That same month the 'Aha Kāne Native Hawaiian Men's Health Conference gathered over six hundred men from across the islands and the U.S. continent to discuss their roles and responsibilities as the metaphorical cornerstones of these walls. The opening ceremonies took place at the Bishop Museum, where chants, prayers, and dances invoked the mana (spiritual power and authority) of Kū. Two months later many of these same men traveled to Pu'ukoholā Heiau to make offerings of ritual items and embodied performance—prominent among them warrior dances with carved

Ty P. Kawika Tengan, "The Return of Ku? Re-membering Hawaiian Masculinity, Warriorhood, and Nation," *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*, ed. Laura R. Graham and H. Glenn Penny, pp. 206-246. Copyright © 2014 by University of Nebraska Press. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 7.1 Members of the Hale Mua, wearing malo (loincloths) and carrying pololū (sixteen-foot-long spears) and pāhoa (daggers), perform at the Pu'ukoholā Heiau ceremonies, August 2010. Photo courtesy of Joey Corcino.

spears—that celebrated the completion of a four-year effort to rebuild the walls that had fallen during a massive earthquake in 2006.

These events highlight the political stakes of gender and cultural performances in Hawai'i. As Wolfe has noted of settler colonialism, “invasion is a structure not an event” (2006:388) and one that operates under a logic of eliminating Natives (either physically or culturally) in order to replace them with non-Natives on “emptied” lands. Hall explains that such strategies of erasure include “the deliberate destruction of non-heteronormative and monogamous relationships, the Indigenous languages that could conceptualize these relationships, and the cultural practices that celebrated them” (2008:278). While recognizing that “gender oppression has been a mode of imperialism in the history of Hawai'i,” Kauanui points out that “the nationalist struggles over the meaning of precolonial history with regard to both gender and sexuality constitute a significant political terrain within the context of Native Hawaiian decolonization” (2008b:283). Taking these Indigenous studies and Native feminist insights as a departure point, I ask what it means for Hawaiian men to link claims of masculinity to those of sovereignty. What is gained and what is lost when the restoration of both Hawaiian nationhood and men's authority is called for in the return of Kū?

Among the core groups participating in the 2010 events was the Hale Mua (Men's House), a grassroots organization on Maui and O'ahu that emerged out of the Hawaiian cultural

nationalist movement in the 1990s with a focus on training Hawaiian men to be community leaders through the practice of Hawaiian warrior traditions. This essay draws on personal involvement and ongoing ethnographic research that I have carried out with the group since 1997, which I have published on more fully elsewhere (Tengan 2008a). My central argument here is that performances of Indigenous masculinities enact both the possibilities and the limits of decolonization. Gender performances in settler societies emerge from the conditions of colonization and the struggles of Indigenous Peoples to persist and thrive as nations on their homelands. Bodies figure centrally in the gendered work of decolonization, for it is there that alternative forms of being and acting—in the Hawaiian case, those based in *ea* (sovereignty, life, breath), genealogy, and *mana*—are re-membered. However, a failure to critique Indigenous masculinities enables the perpetuation of settler heteropatriarchy and ultimately constrains the possibilities of Indigenous freedom and sovereign expression.

This chapter begins with a brief sketch of the historical and sociological contours of the Hawaiian community and the Hale Mua on Maui.¹ I follow that with a discussion of how ceremonies that invoke *Kū* foreground the ideological dimensions of reclaiming Indigenous masculinity in the service of nation building. Then I focus on the Hale Mua's bodystrengthening routines and their intersections with broader discourses of violence and enactments of gender and culture through dance. It is through these ritual and bodily performances that Hawaiian masculine and warrior subjectivities come to acquire new meaning. I end by considering the possibilities and problematics that these reformulated identities hold for social and political change.

A Sketch of Hawaiian History and Community

According to Hawaiian *mo'olelo* (stories, histories, narratives), the first Oceanic voyagers came to Hawai'i some two thousand years ago and eventually established a highly stratified chiefdom. Yet once Hawai'i was put on the global imperial map with Captain James Cook's arrival in 1778, change was much more rapid. Despite international recognition of the Hawaiian Kingdom's independence in 1843, the nation suffered an overthrow backed by the U.S. military in 1893 and an annexation in 1898—both done illegally. White American sugar barons and missionary descendants thereafter ran the Territory of Hawai'i like a plantation, as Hawaiian leaders worked to reverse the population collapse that saw some 90 percent of their people swept away by epidemics. World War II brought further changes, including the empowerment of second-generation Japanese American veterans and labor leaders who secured statehood in 1959 and led the political and economic shift from agribusiness to militarism and tourism (McGregor 2007).²

Native Hawaiians renewed their cultural pride and political consciousness during a period of renaissance and protest in the 1970s, and by the 1980s a vibrant cultural nationalist movement flourished (Trask 1999). The recuperation of old identity terms such as *Kanaka Maoli* (Real People) and *Kanaka 'Ōiwi* (People of the Bone) indexed new political and cultural claims of Indigeneity

(Ayau and Tengan 2002; Blaisdell and Mokuau 1994). A protest march and rally in downtown Honolulu attended by fifteen thousand people, a People's International Tribunal (Ka Ho'okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli), and an apology from President Bill Clinton and the U.S. government marked the 1993 centenary of the illegal overthrow. The return of lands and sovereignty seemed imminent.

However, in 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Rice v. Cayetano* that failed to recognize Indigenous Hawaiian claims to sovereign status fueled a backlash of "color-blind" lawsuits aimed at dismantling the few programs, entitlements, and rights that Kanaka Maoli had secured under American occupation. The U.S. senator Daniel Akaka pushed forward a bill to protect against these attacks by redefining Hawaiians as members of a Native nation; a number of activists and intellectuals contested both the "Akaka Bill" and the color-blind attacks as threats to broader claims of Hawaiian sovereignty. In the post-*Rice* era, Kanaka Maoli and their allies throughout the islands and on the continent organized in new ways to imagine and struggle for a more just and sustainable future for all peoples of Hawai'i (Okamura 2008; Kauanui 2008a; Howes and Osorio 2010).

Such transformed visions of a new social order offer hope to 'Ōiwi, who experience severe economic and political marginalization in their homelands and increasing growth in the diaspora. In the 2010 U.S. Census, Kānaka 'Ōiwi numbered 527,077, some 45 percent of whom lived on the continent (Hixson et al. 2012:16). The 289,970 residing in Hawai'i made up 21 percent of the 1.36 million residents of the state, making them the fourth-largest ethnic group, behind whites, Filipino Americans, and Japanese Americans (Niesse 2011). In 2000 Hawaiians had the highest rates of unemployment, poverty, and incarceration of all major ethnic groups in Hawai'i (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005:80–87).³ They constituted the second-least-likely group "to work in a managerial or professional capacity" and the "most likely to be employed in construction, extraction, and maintenance positions and in production, transportation, and material-moving occupations" (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005:84–85). Jonathan Okamura also found that "Native Hawaiian men [were] substantially underrepresented as management and business specialists" whereas Hawaiian women were "employed at parity" in these high-status jobs; conversely, Hawaiian men were over-employed in service work and women were at par (2008:47, 48–49). As far as health statistics went, Hawaiians overall had the highest rates of obesity, early morbidity, depressive symptoms, suicidal tendencies, and certain other "risky behaviors" (especially among young adults) (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005:94–98, 111–13, 197–203); they also had the second-highest infant mortality rates (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005:157).

At the same time, owing in part to increased self-identification as well as the ability to mark multiple races on census forms, the Native Hawaiian population grew 90.1 percent between the 1990 and 2000 censuses and another 31.4 percent in 2010 (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005:29; Hixson et al. 2012:6). As Kauanui (2008a) has noted, a return to "genealogical reckoning" of Indigeneity, rather than adherence to the settler logics of blood quantum classification, has enabled Hawaiians to contest the discourses of disappearance that dominated the early twentieth-century debates over "rehabilitating" the Native. Though no longer considered a "dying race," Kanaka 'Ōiwi of

the early twenty-first century continued to struggle in a context in which identity mattered in new and important ways. This was especially the case for Hawaiian men, who above all others were thought to be “missing” and whose “return” highlighted one of the many gendered aspects of decolonization.

Kā I Mua: Cast Forward into the Men’s House

U.S. colonial discourses of incorporation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were heavily gendered, rendering Hawai‘i’s lands and people as the feminine “hula girl” waiting to be taken by the masculine Uncle Sam (Ferguson and Turnbull 1999; Imada 2012; Tengan 2008a:50). Hawaiian men were typically erased from this picture; if they were represented at all, it was as either overly domesticated or irreparably dysfunctional—both forms of discursive emasculation that denied them manhood in a modern society (Tengan 2008a:10–11).

In a related but different way, Native Hawaiian nationalism in the late twentieth century was also gendered as feminine. Women’s leadership in the decolonization movement was noted widely (Trask 1999), even to the point that men (who had been active throughout) were perceived as absent and thus called upon to be more engaged (Tengan 2008a:12–13). The animating question of “where are the men?” led to the formation of the Hale Mua (Men’s House).

Their story begins with a commemoration held at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau in 1991, the bicentennial of its construction in 1791. Since 1972 the heiau (temple) had been a National Historic Site under the management of the U.S. National Park Service; the 1991 event entitled Ho‘oku‘ikahi (To Unify As One) sought to redefine the space as a center of Indigenous Hawaiian mana (spiritual and political power), rather than an object of U.S. imperial state power. In an effort to again petition the heavens for Hawaiian unity, a committee led by the Maui carver and storyteller Sam Ka‘ai (b. 1938) conducted new ceremonies on the heiau and assembled a group of men called Nā Koa (the Warriors or the Courageous Ones). Many of the Nā Koa members later became involved in the revival of the Hawaiian fighting art known as lua, which began with a series of seminars and lua schools sponsored by the Bishop Museum. Taking up the production of carved weaponry and the practice of martial arts, these warriors for the nation would embody the aggressive posturing of identity that came out of the cultural nationalist movement. Ka‘ai explained that Nā Koa was “not about being warlike” but “being courageous enough to look at your spirit. ... It’s about spending yourself, and in the spending you know more about yourself, things you already are” (Meyer 1998). On Maui, Ka‘ai mentored a group of Nā Koa led by Kyle Nākānelua (b. 1959), a firefighter and one of the first students of the reestablished lua schools. They returned to Pu‘ukoholā each year to conduct ceremonies of rededication, renewal, and remembering. Between 1997 and 1998 the group split from the lua schools and reorganized itself as the Hale Mua o Maui.

The Hale Mua takes its name from the precolonial men’s eating house and domestic temple, which was a part of the ‘aikapu (sacred eating) religiopolitical system that separated men and



Figure 7.2 Members of the Hale Mua (*far left*) await the presentation of ho'okupu (offerings) by other groups on the grounds below Pu'ukoholā Heiau, August 2010. Visible atop the heiau is a hale (house) made using traditional thatching techniques. Photo courtesy of Joey Corcino.

women during eating periods. Young boys were initiated in a ceremony called *kā i mua*, which means “cast into the men’s house” or “thrust forward,” and given their first *malo* (loincloth). The *hale mua* then became a space in which boys were socialized and learned the skills and stories of fishing, farming, cooking, canoe and house building, fighting, sailing, lovemaking, fathering, and providing for the family. Those taking a functionalist approach to culture and society argue that when the *‘aikapu* system and the *hale mua* ended in 1819, men lost their way and have remained adrift in society ever since (Nunes and Whitney 1994; Paglinawan et al. 2006:62–63; Pukui et al. 1972, vol. 2:230). This notion is problematic and works to perpetuate a colonial discourse of emasculation—ineffectual or absent men—and a gendered logic of settler elimination. The loss of the *hale mua* was only one of a number of factors that contributed to the social decay experienced by Hawaiian men, not all of whom were equally affected. With that said, the *hale mua* metaphorically serves as a useful model for action and transformation by providing an idealized space for the performance of embodied and discursive practices associated with feeding, praying, and rearing.

The basic aim of the Hale Mua on Maui was to establish a cultural foundation for Hawaiian men by creating a safe space for learning and practicing culture, engaging in the ritual process of self-transformation, and establishing networks among the men. The general premise of the group was that colonization and modernization had led to a loss of Hawaiian life and culture, especially for the men. By reestablishing a Hale Mua, men would gain a deeper understanding of

their history and acquire the skills, knowledge, and courage to be more effective as members and leaders in their families and communities. With its specific focus on warriorhood, the Maui group trained its men in Hawaiian martial arts, ceremonial conduct, carving, chant, and dance. The yearly activities of the Mua typically corresponded with the precolonial Hawaiian ritual calendar that devoted eight months of the year (approximately February/March–September/October) to the activities of Kū, god of work, industry, farming, fishing, governance, and political maneuvering, including war. The remaining four months (approximately October/November–January/February) celebrated Lono, god of fertility and peace, through the Makahiki harvest festivals; all work ceased, and the people engaged in sport, games, hula, relaxation, and the giving of offerings.⁴ Much of the discussion that follows references the Kū season of 2002, which included weapons-crafting workshops in February, the Wehe Kū ceremony in March, weekly meetings between April and August, the Pu'ukoholā event in August, and a closing ceremony in September.

The active membership in 2002 fluctuated between twenty-five and thirty-five in any given week. Most of the men were middle class, though there were a few working- and lower-middle-class men as well; most came from working-class families and were thus upwardly mobile. The median age was in the midforties, though there was fair representation of different age groups between thirty and sixty. I assumed (incorrectly, as I discuss at the end) that all were heterosexual. Though the men held a wide range of occupations, just over half were government salaried workers. The majority of the men in the group could claim at least one ancestry in addition to Hawaiian; most could claim two or three. Most of the men felt a dual sense of alienation—from Hawaiian culture because of their Americanization and class status and from American culture because of their Hawaiian ethnic background and upbringing. A desire to find one's place was a common theme running through the discussions, as many of them had experiences of travel and mobility. Anxieties of status, education, and violence underlay men's motives for transformation and were worked out, importantly through bodily and discursive practices of re-membering.

Re-membering Hawaiian Masculinities

The Hale Mua provided its members with a ritual space that allowed them to learn and perform those 'Ōiwi traditions and practices that rooted them in a deeper genealogy of place as Hawaiian men who must live and work in a settler society—even if it was one they sought to transform—outside of the sanctuary of the Hale Mua. The body figured centrally in activities such as wearing a malo (loincloth) or dancing with a spear (which I will discuss below). As Farnell (1999) notes, bodily processes produce new forms of knowledge that exist and work in ways that both complement and go beyond the contemporary understandings of culture as symbolic system. It is this quality of embodied discursive action—the active signification, enactment, and production of identities through bodily movements and engagements—that makes groups such as the Hale Mua such potent sites for identity and self-formation.

Importantly, these practices involved an active re-membering of community—a “reaggregation of members” (Myerhoff 1982:111) connected and bound by a shared past and homeland recalled through performance. Thus the Mua’s ceremonies, dances, chants, routines, and stories became fertile grounds for re-membering masculinities, which can be understood as a gendered memory work that facilitates the formation of group subjectivities through the coordination of personal memories, historical narratives, and bodily experiences and representations (Tengan 2008b).

In her discussion of re-membering masculinities across Oceania, Margaret Jolly writes that such an approach seeks to “connect men’s sexed bodies with individual and collective processes of memory, in continuing conversations between pasts and presents” (2008:6). Commenting on Connell 2005 and Butler 1990, Jolly notes that embodied performances of gender “can both reproduce and subvert” the “privileged scripts of culture, nation, and heterosexual desire” that are found in “hegemonic masculinities”—the models of being a man that are “broadly accepted as dominant” (2008:5). In settler societies such as Hawai‘i, Indigenous “male potency emerges in relation—and sometimes in resistance—to the hegemonic forces of colonialism and contending imperial models of masculinity” (Jolly 2008:1). Yet as Vicente Diaz points out, “tackling” such formations requires careful attention to the ways that American and Native Pacific cultural elements may collude in “hypermasculinist and homophobic performances” (2011:91), particularly those of warriorhood.

For the remainder of this essay, I will focus on the ways that the Hale Mua actively re-members Hawaiian masculinity through embodied discursive action—particularly body-strengthening routines, interpersonal greetings, traditional tattoos, fighting arts, and ceremonial practices. These practices foreground mana, ea (sovereignty, life, breath), and genealogy and are central to understanding (and critiquing) the masculinities performed in the ritual invocations of Kū and the weekly meetings.

Kū Rising: Structures of Mana

The Wehe Kū (opening of Kū season) ceremonies officially began the 2002 cycle of activities for the Hale Mua. Inspired by the ceremonies at Pu‘ukoholā, the Wehe Kū on Maui took place at the historically and spiritually deep heiau of Pihanakalani (Gathering Place of the Chiefs) and the chiefly complex Haleki‘i (House of Images). The March 30 gathering took place at 4:00 a.m., with the men dressed in malo (loincloths) and kīhei (shoulder cloaks) and carrying the wooden spears they had carved in February. The first half of the ceremony consisted of a recitation of prayers and genealogies, a ceremonial blessing of weapons, and a greeting of the rising sun with chant. The second half involved a ritual sharing of ‘awa (kava) and food, followed by a discussion of the work that would be carried out that year in order for the men to take up their responsibilities in the family and community. The season of Kū had begun.

In the Hawaiian pantheon of gods, the Kū/Hina pair represents the male/ female duality of the sexes that organizes the universe in the cosmogonic genealogy chant the Kumulipo

(Liliuokalani 1978[1897]; Beckwith 1972; Kame'eleihiwa 1999:2–4; Valeri 1985:12). Kū, whose name means “standing, upright, erect,” encompasses all the male gods (and their properties) and represents the male generating power; Hina, whose name means “to fall, topple, or lean over” and references the moon (mahina), presides over the female deities and represents female fecundity and the power of growth and reproduction (Beckwith 1970:12–13; Pukui et al. 1972, vol. 2:122; Valeri 1985:12). As Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa remarks, “The Hawaiian world was ... divided into female and male domains of work, and was considered pono, correct and righteous, when there was a balance between the two. When there is balance in the world, the ancestral Akua [Gods] are pleased, and when there is perfect harmony in the universe, people are protected from all harm” (1999:4). Not only is Kū defined with and in opposition to Hina (and vice versa), but also if either is missing, the whole of society suffers. As Pukui et al. explain, “Kū, the masculine, is always accompanied by Hina, the feminine,” and together the two “symbolize the balance embodied in well-being” (1972, vol. 2:128, 147).

Kanaka Maoli seeking to return well-being to the self and society have used the metaphors of duality and balance between Kū and Hina as models for thinking. One of the primary philosophies of the lua (Hawaiian fighting art) seminars was that of understanding how the balance of Kū/Hina guided not only attacks and counterattacks but also the embodiment of both the masculine and feminine in each individual; indeed, the word “lua” itself means “duality” or “two, second” (Paglinawan et al. 2006:9). As the 'ōlohe (lua master) Richard Paglinawan explained in an interview when the classes began, “Lua is in harmony with nature. You go with the flow of things, and you use it to your advantage. Lua is fluid, like hula. Hula and lua at one time were almost one and the same because men were the dancers. Lua was the ‘hard’ part, hula is the soft. So you could relate it to yin and yang, or Kū and Hina” (Clark 1993:10). In this frame, the masculine lua complemented the feminine hula. Kyle Nākānelua credited much of what he learned about Kū/Hina balance, and his subsequent focus on the Kū, to his experience with lua.

Importantly, the connection to the mana (spiritual power and authority) of Kū comes through the physical embodiment and performance of it in ritual and in training. As Wende Elizabeth Marshall has pointed out in her review of anthropological literature on mana, the Pacific term has been interpreted in numerous ways, including Roger Keesing’s rendering of it as a “quality of efficacy manifest in visible results” (1984:149) and Brad Shore’s (1989:140) association of it with a “generative potency [and] the sources [of] organic creation” (Marshall 2011:4; see also Tomlinson 2006). Highlighting the performativity of mana, Marshall Sahlins writes that it “is the creative power Hawaiians describe as making visible what is invisible, causing things to be seen” (1981:31). For Kame'eleihiwa (1992:46–49), the route of Kū—success in politics and warfare accompanied by the construction of massive heiau—was one of the two traditional paths (the other being genealogy) to mana that would justify a chief’s rule over the land. In the present-day context of the Hawaiian nationalist movement, Hawaiian mana is invoked in a number of ways as a direct challenge to American imperial power (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 2013:207; Marshall 2011:6; Trask 1999:91–92).



Figure 7.3 The Hale Mua executes a maneuver called Kū Pololū, or “Erect the Long Spear,” where the men rotate (in sync) the pololū (long spears) from a horizontal to a perpendicular position and exclaim “Kū Pololū!” The embodied discursive act at once announces and performs the rebuilding of mana Kū. Pu’ukoholā Heiau, August 2010. Photo courtesy of Joey Corcino.

As a gendered project, the effort to reinvigorate the mana of Kū ritualizes resistance to the perceived colonial emasculation of Hawaiian men and the Hawaiian nation (cf. Sinha 1995). As Nākānelua described it, “Because we’re a male, masculine-oriented group, our ‘imi ‘ana [searching] is towards the masculinity of the culture because there’s been so much femininity. And again, not that femininity is bad; everything has its place and its time. No laila [Therefore] ... if you believe everything has its place and time, then it should hold true to da fact that there should be a place and a time for the mana Kū. There’s a time for healing, there’s a time for building mana” (Nākānelua 1999). The idea of building is important here, for if decolonization entails healing, it also demands an active rebuilding of nation, place, and hale (house). Yet in the name of cultural reclamation, the project of revitalizing the mana Kū runs the risk of inscribing the Kū/Hina and male/ female dichotomies with the valences of strong/weak and dominant/submissive that work to support the structures of Western colonial patriarchy. Arguably, Hawaiian history has numerous examples of strong, dominant women figures, and thus the Kū/Hina duality should not be seen as absolute or even applicable in all situations. I will discuss this tension further below; here I note that invocations of Kū and Hina index strategies for balance and pono (balance, well-being) in society and in individuals as well as the perceived imbalances and needs for restoration.

Kū is also the god of governance, productivity, work, industry, upland forests, deep-sea fishing, and war. Unfortunately, the common rendering of the Kū, and most notably his manifestation of Kūkā’ilimoku (the island-snatching god), exclusively appends to him the dubious distinction of

being *only* the god of war. The Pu'ukoholā ceremonial events attempted to refigure that depiction, so influenced by colonial and missionary out-looks. After interviewing Sam Ka'ai, chairman of the 1991 ceremonies and elder advisor for the Hale Mua, Steve Friesen wrote, "Western historians have focused on this militaristic aspect of Ku because of their own imperialist interests. But Hawaiians, according to [Ka'ai], worship the deities like Ku who care for them. The full measure of the god's care is recognized in the full measure of names, and must be understood in that broad context" (Friesen 1992:22). These tropes of "Kū the war god" are also used to change colonial subjects into savages and bloodthirsty male warriors. The primary goal of Nā Koa was to restore courage and discipline, not violence. As Ka'ai and Nākānelua sought to decouple the concept of Nā Koa from violence and war, so too did they seek to place Kū in the larger context of his multitude of being. When men re-membered the mana of Kū, they too would be upright members of the community ready to rebuild the nation. This was precisely the goal of the Kū exhibit and the opening of the 'Aha Kāne Native Hawaiian Men's Health Conference in 2010.

Embodying Sovereignty, Ancestors, and Land

In 2002 the Hale Mua o Maui met once a week from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at a harborside property consisting of a meeting hall and a grassy area. When the men arrived, many wore pā'ū (waist wraparounds) and greeted each other with the honi, a traditional practice of touching of noses and exchanging breath. Training began with prayers and chants that were followed by warm-ups and stretches. A more rigorous routine of ho'ōikaika kino (body-strengthening exercises) followed, much of which incorporated the seven-foot wooden spears that members had carved. When that was finished, various dances and martial sets were covered, including those that would be performed at Pu'ukoholā. The last part of practice ended in sparring, which was in preparation for an upcoming sham battle that would also take place at the heiau. Though padded spears and protective gear were utilized, the training was hard and would leave men with cuts, bruises, sprains, and sometimes broken bones. Practice ended with discussion, prayer, and a final exchange of honi.

Ho'ōikaika kino primarily works to achieve pono (balance, well-being) by strengthening the body, mind, and spirit. American ideals of beauty and health shape the ways in which preoccupations and obsessions with the body are articulated by Hawaiians today, especially since the dominant sexualized images of Kanaka men and women in the tourist industry are those that conform with Western standards of slim but shapely physiques, straight hair, and facial features that are "Polynesian" but mixed with those of Anglos and/or Asians (Desmond 1999; Imada 2012). Yet for 'Ōiwi (as is the case with many other Indigenous Peoples), the colonial experience of decimation from diseases and epidemics continues to attack the cultural and psychological immune system of the Kanaka body politic and far out weighs any concern over appearance.

The colonization of the Hawaiian body manifests itself not only in culturally defined regimes of sexuality and propriety but also in more viscerally distressing ways through obesity, diabetes,

cancer, and other health-related problems (Marshall 2011; McMullin 2010). These often culminate in high mortality and suicide rates, which for Hawaiian men approach epidemic proportions (Blaisdell and Mokuau 1994; Cook et al. 2005). Likewise, the structures of late capitalism and Hawai'i's dependence on imported foods and goods (as well as the forced removal of Hawaiians from the islands) maintains this bodily malaise to such a point that for many Hawaiians disease has become something endemic to their culture. Thus the project of decolonization can proceed only by recovering and healing the body.

In the Hale Mua, as in the Hawaiian health organizations that Marshall (2011) and McMullin (2010) described, the well-being of the Hawaiian people includes as its core component the vitality of the culture, and as such, many of the activities are culturally based and include a metapragmatics of healing the nation through healing the culture, identity, and soul of the "sick" people. In addition to the process of healing, the more aggressive projects of anticolonial and nationalist resistance require assertions of strength and power, both culturally and bodily. For the Hale Mua, these are gendered as inherently masculine and essential for the remaking of Hawaiian men, particularly as their presence has been obfuscated by colonial discourse.

One of the most profound and yet understated performances of a remembered 'Ōiwi masculinity is in the honi nose greeting. While some of the older men in the group remember their grandparents greeting each other with the honi, most people in Hawai'i no longer use it. It is now practiced primarily among Native Hawaiians who have been involved in cultural revitalization activities, and particularly among men. In part, this return to the honi has been inspired by interactions with the Indigenous Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand who had maintained that tradition; indeed, much of the project of reconstituting Hawaiian masculine subjectivities has come in a trans-Oceanic dialogue with Māori (Tengan 2008a:12–13, 63). Beyond this, though, the honi itself enacts a form of decolonial being, for the Hawaiian term "ea" that means breath and air also translates to "sovereignty," "life," and "to rise up" (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 2013:6; Pukui and Elbert 1986:36). When members of the Hale Mua stand and exchange breath in the honi, they are also asserting their sovereign presence that settler colonialism has failed to eliminate. The act affirms their bonds of solidarity and membership, particularly as the honi involves a closeness and intimacy that might otherwise be disavowed in more normative settings.

Nākānelua urges members to stand up and take charge of their own health. He speaks with a conviction and authority that earn the men's respect not only because he is articulate but also because he literally embodies those qualities, ethics, and attributes that he urges others to take up. Years of training in sports, the military, martial arts, and the fire department and working in the taro patches have given him a muscular, tanned physique. Through his training as a firefighter and other training in health care, he has taken as his kuleana (area of responsibility) the health and welfare of Hawaiians on the personal, professional, and political levels; in fact, when he was a member of the sovereignty organization Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, he was in charge of the Maui caucus's Department of Health (Nākānelua 2002).



Figure 7.4 Kyle Nākānelua (center) chants the opening lines of the Maha'ū ritual dance at Pu'ukoholā Heiau, August 2010. His kākau (tattoos) are visible on his leg, chest, and arms; less visible in this image are the kākau that go down the left side of his face. Photo courtesy of Joey Corcino.

Nākānelua also wears a number of traditionally designed tattoos that represent his ancestral lineage and visibly mark his body as a Hawaiian one. This becomes even more impressive when one discovers that Keone Nunes, a Hawaiian tattoo practitioner who uses rituals, protocols, and handmade tools and needles, placed these markings on Nākānelua in a manner that was more painful and meaningful than if done at a tattoo parlor with a machine.⁵ Many of the men come to not only respect but also identify with Nākānelua through the life experiences he shares in talk story, and a number of members over the years have followed his example and had their genealogies tapped into their skin during group tattoo workshops. As Keith Camacho notes, “Indigenous genealogies exceed American spatial and temporal parameters by recalling older and foraging newer connections of peoples and places” (2011:xiii). The genealogical tattoos connect men’s bodies to ancestors and islands that preceded settler occupation. It is through a kinship of lived experience and intersecting lineages that the Hale Mua infuses ea into a re-membered genealogy.

Two particular aspects as they relate to bodily experience and performance are worth extended discussion here: violence and dance. It is through the gendered remaking of these practices that Nākānelua is most successful at lowering men’s defenses and opening them up to new experiences.

The Violence of Modernity

The problem of violence and unusually high incarceration rates among Hawaiian men has long been a topic of great concern in the Kanaka Maoli community. In 2000 Hawaiians between the ages of twenty and forty-four had the highest rates of suicide among the major ethnic groups in Hawai'i (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005:113). The rates of confirmed child abuse or neglect were three to four times those of the other major ethnic groups, and Hawaiians were twice as likely as others to report physical, sexual, or emotional abuse on a Department of Health Survey (Kana'iaupuni 2005:63–64). While representing about 20 percent of Hawai'i's population, Hawaiians made up 38 percent of the in-state prison population and 41 percent of Hawai'i inmates housed in out-of-state facilities (OHA 2006:171, 173). There is a danger in reproducing such data without accounting for biases in collection and other possible flaws in methodology, and I do not seek to present this as proof of endemic Hawaiian violence. Nonetheless, these are disturbing figures that unfortunately correspond to given notions of Hawaiians, which themselves serve as the source of efforts to locate alternative ways of healing and transforming (cf. O'Neill 1996). They are also relevant because, as many studies of masculinities elsewhere have shown, violence is one of the most fundamental and problematic ways in which men define and embody subjectivity (Bowker 1998; Connell 2005:81–86).

One of the more promising aspects of the reemergence of the pā lua (fighting art schools), Nā Koa (the Courageous Ones/Warriors), and the Hale Mua (Men's House) is their potential to provide men a place in which violence born of hurt, pain, and lack of cultural identity can be transformed into a more productive form of energy. It is also a place where members can see and meet other men who can help in the process of both healing and constructing a different idea of masculinity. Such a theme was prominent in the interviews I conducted with Puka Ho, a thirty-seven-year-old Maui County lifeguard. While contemplating the increase in his desire to learn about Hawaiian history and language, he also discussed his new understandings of being a man:

HO: A lot of values dat Kyle [Nākānelua] puts out there fo da guys in da Hale Mua is, you know, basically take care your family, take care your stuff ... do what you gotta do, do what you tink is right. And I tank him fo dat, because if ... I nevah run into dis bunch of guys, I probably would be still drinking beer aftah work every day, and instead of tinkin about what I do and how I do it.

TENGAN: So you feel it's had a real positive impact on your life?

HO: Well, yeah, real positive impact, because when I was younger, I grew up, my dad would drink every night, come home bust up my maddah, bus me up,

you know, send my maddah to one hospital. So you know da kine role models, that's how you figure, oh, well, I goin get oldah, I goin work, come home drunk. And Nākānelua wen show dat there's anadah path fo take (Ho 2002).⁶

Significantly, Ho described seeing a different vision of mature Hawaiian masculinity that contradicted his own previously held and embodied notions. Though I would not consider Ho's experiences the norm for most of the men, he certainly was not alone. Three others in the group told me they had grown up in homes where beatings were more common than not, and one of them even left home when he was seventeen and lived on the beach for a while before he had a stable job. He didn't blame his father for that behavior, for he knew that "life was hard and that's how they were," an indication that the larger structural forces were as much (if not more) of a contributing factor as individual or cultural means for coping. He also credited Nākānelua and the Hale Mua for helping to alter his perspective.

Richard Bissen Jr., the forty-year-old chief prosecutor of Maui (now a circuit court judge), also grew up in a family where violence was "natural," though in his case it was usually among the older men, who would get into fights with each other. Family violence was even seen as predestined, since his mother's maiden name was Nākoa. Like Ho, he spoke of the way Nākānelua helped to change his ideas about warriorhood and violence:

There's varying interpretations of [Nākoa]. The way my mom had interpreted their name ... "the warriors" ... was like "the fighters" because there was a lot of fighting within the family, I mean a lot of hard-headed Hawaiians who ... were stubborn, and resorting to physical violence was a natural thing. ... But when Nākānelua explained it he said, "You know, it doesn't have to mean 'the warrior' meaning, like the violence." The way they wanted the term to be understood was "the courageous." And, the best example they gave, which is what has stuck with me, is the courage to be a young, Hawaiian male, and to wear a malo [loincloth] in public, and to say, "This, I am not ashamed of who I am or what I stand for." And it's that you have the courage to live your belief. (Bissen 2002)

Those familiar with the feature film *Once Were Warriors* (1995) might find parallels in the discourse of transforming violence by recourse to warrior cultural traditions that inculcate discipline, pride, and self-esteem, thereby transforming violent energies into productive ones. Indeed, many men find hope for the younger generations in the Hale Mua precisely on this basis.

Along these lines, Nākānelua has spoken to inmates at Maui Community Correctional Center and staff members from Child Protective Services. Others, such as Ka'iana Haili on Hawai'i,

have used the hale mua concept to develop full curricula for domestic violence, substance abuse, and prison programs. Among other things, Haili holds that “our male ancestors were warrior/healers” and “to be either you had to learn the balance; in order to kill we learn to heal—Kū and his many forms are balanced in both death and life.” While rooting the men in the cultural practices of land stewardship and taro culture, he also advocates a political and structural understanding “that as long as we allow others to determine the fate of our ‘āina [land] we will be at the top of the lists.” (email to author, December 26, 2006).⁷ Sally Engle Merry noted this sort of discourse in the program of a Native Hawaiian pastor (also in Hilo, Hawai‘i) who “talked about the ideal warrior as a person violent in war but not at home” and “discussed male violence from a perspective of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as well as Christian ideas” (2006:46).

While the possibilities for positive transformation of violent masculinities are there, they are limited and rely largely on the tailoring of the Hale Mua model to the needs of the group. The majority of the men who were in the Hale Mua at the time of my primary research were older men with steady jobs who, as thirty-nine-year-old accountant Clifford Alakai (2002) framed it, had “structure in their lives”; they were not the at-risk youth or otherwise marginalized men who would perhaps benefit most from the community and identity the Hale Mua offered. Moreover, Nākānelua was quite clear, as Ho noted, in stating that you had to “take care your stuff” first before dedicating your time to the Mua, and he did not present the Hale Mua as the panacea for all the social ills and problems that Hawaiian men face. The issue of gendered violence will not solve itself overnight and will require approaches on multiple levels. While part of that may involve a return of sovereignty and land, it must also include interventions into the structures of domination in the domestic space.

Within the group, though, the men’s embodied experiences suggested that the most effective means of reforming masculinities defined through violence was refiguring warrior and masculine subjectivities through body-reflexive practices. R. W. Connell defines this as a process wherein bodies act as “both objects and subjects of practice, ... the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined” (2005:61).

This was precisely the appeal that lua, warrior arts, and the whole regime of physical training (ho’oikaika kino) held for remaking masculinity in the Hale Mua. As Nākānelua explained of the training routine, “It is very Kū oriented. ... It makes men feel really good—no different, no different from the formation of the karate dojos, no different from shoto-kan, or kung-fu, or anything like that. It just, it’s a way for men to develop their physical prowess and their thinking abilities, their strategic abilities, to practice their leadership roles” (Nākānelua 1999). Through such body-reflexive practices, men came to perform and know themselves and their bodies in a new way. Some had familiarity from previous experience in (as well as popular stereotypes of) the martial arts, and this worked to also make the process of coordinating ‘Ōiwi ideals and movements into redefined practices of “fighting.” The other primary area where this was worked out was in dance.

Dancing as Men

One of the most notable changes brought about by the Hawaiian renaissance in the 1970s was the rebirth of men's dancing, largely tied to the revival of the ancient (kahiko) forms of dance. The Hawaiian scholar George Kanahele contrasted the "authentic" ancient form to the "modern or hapa haole (half-foreign)" one, which had become "an accommodation to the tourists" used to "advertise the charm of the islands" with "a smiling hula lassie" (1982:15). In ways similar to the Hale Mua's reclamation of "real" cultural traditions of warriorhood, the "return of the male dancer to his rightful place" (Kanahele 1982:15) was a refuting of the colonial feminization, commodification, and "prostitution" of the modern form in the tourism industry (Trask 1999). In 1977 Kanahele remarked, "I remember as a kid no local boy would be caught dead dancing the hula for fear of being called a sissy, but now you're likely to get popped in the mouth if you imply that a male dancer, who may be on the football team, is a sissy. Something must be happening to change this deep-set attitude" (1982:3). Two years later he added, "Male dancers have also become favorites of local audiences, both men and women, although the squeals of glee I hear when the men come on stage wearing a modern style malo [loincloth] come mostly from the wahines [women]. John Lake tells me that invariably it is the male dancers who get the biggest applause" (1982:15). It's notable that Lake, who had a Hawaiian club at the all-boys Catholic St. Louis High School, was a part of this movement, as he later came to be the primary ritual specialist at Pu'ukoholā (see Tengan 2008a: ch. 2, 3). Lake, along with others such as Darrell Lupenui and John Ka'imikaua, did much to change the image of hula as feminine, and today men are very prominent in hula competitions, such as the Merrie Monarch Festival, held annually in Hilo, Hawai'i, which is televised statewide and streamed live on the web.

However, many of the men in the Hale Mua still associated hula with women and māhū (effeminate males, gay men, and/or transgendered women), as have other scholars (Robertson 1989).⁸ Nākānelua was one of those football players dancing hula in school (Maryknoll, a Catholic school), but he felt that it was only because he was a starter on the team that nobody teased him. Coming from a working-class neighborhood in downtown Honolulu, he hung out with boys who defined their masculinity through toughness and fighting. He recalled that when he was invited to join a hālau (hula school), he declined because he felt he would have to "duke it out every day" with the "rugged" guys he hung out with.

It was precisely this rejection of the "feminine" form of hula that led some members to search for something more "masculine" in the Hale Mua. Jacob Kana, a thirty-one-year-old power plant worker who was raised in the rural taro farming and fishing village of Kahakuloa, recalled his discovery of the Mua as such:

I really liked the group because, first of all it's like, ah, just a bunch of men, eh, just all local braddahs just gettin' togeda and stuff. That, to me, dat's what we need, dat's what was missing, all dis time. Cause like everybody else, like da



Figure 7.5 Men of the Hale Mua perform the ha'a (ritual dance) Maha'ū with mea kaua (traditional weaponry). Photo courtesy of Joey Corcino.

wahines li' dat, dey had hula and stuff li' dat, but to me was, I dunno, I nevah like hula. Hula wasn't my ting, was more, I dunno, I used to tink was soft . Was, and, I dunno if dat's wrong or what, but da's what I used to tink, so I nevah did like join hula. But to me nevah have notin' fo' men. (Kana 2002)

Keenly aware of this perception, Nākānelua tried to emphasize the masculine and strong aspects of dance, often by highlighting the martial aspects. He also focused on the ha'a forms, which were understood to be more sacred, serious, and rigid and thus less secular, playful, and soft . Included in his repertoire of ha'a was the Maha'ū, a ritual dance honoring the Hawaiian pig god Kamapua'a that incorporates fighting techniques and weaponry. The ha'a is the cognate to the Indigenous Māori dance form of the haka, commonly thought of now as a “war dance.” This form has come to be a national symbol and global commodity through its performance by the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team and its use in the marketing campaigns of the corporate sponsor Adidas (Hokowhitu, this volume; Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002). For many Hawaiians (and other Polynesians), the haka represents the archetypal performance of Polynesian warrior masculinity, and thus some cultural organizations and local football teams performed the haka before games (Tengan and Markham 2009).⁹ While inspired by the haka, Nākānelua chose not to appropriate the form since for him it would represent a stealing of another people's mana and a diminishment of our own.¹⁰ In choreographing ha'a, Nākānelua emphasized the lua strikes

and fighting techniques embedded in the dance steps. This worked extremely well for Ho, who remembered, “The first time we had to dance one hula, I was like, ‘Oh, brah, I no dance hula!’ I mean, nothin wrong wit hula, but dat’s not fo me. But when I seen them doin ‘em, I was like, ‘Whoa, dis buggah get plenty martial moves,’ I could see in ‘em. And dat’s what wen’ kinda attract me to dat. ... I mean I no like dance da hula, but oh, dat buggah look like one good technique or sometin” (Ho 2002).

The concerted effort to redefine dance was a reaction to the continued appropriation of the hula as a commodity spectacle and the consequent performance of it as such. The latter includes a cultivation of homogeneity of body types, appearances, and movements in groups that perform in tourist venues and in local competitions. Jane Desmond argues that a “physical foundationalism” operates in touristic discourse and posits the body as “that which is really ‘real,’ a repository of truth” through bodily performances (1999:xiv). She notes that “bodies function as the material signs for categories of social difference, including divisions of gender, race, cultural identity and species” (1999:xiv). Bodily performances serve as the final authenticator of the commodity of difference, and thus the industry highlights the “centrality of the performing body, binding notions of ‘facticity,’ presence, naturalism, and authenticity together under the sign of spectator corporeality” (1999:xv). At sites such as the Merrie Monarch Festival, which has become a spectacle visited by tourists and locals alike, both male and female dancers are heavily sexualized. The young, muscular males evoke the “squeals of glee ... from the wahines.” This body type corresponds to the touristic image of the domesticated and sexualized beach boy and Duke Kahanamoku (see Desmond 1999; Ferguson and Turnbull 1999:38; Tengan 2008a:ch. 1; cf. Walker 2011). For the middle-aged, heavier men in the Mua who came from a tough upbringing and contested such touristic images, the “deep-set attitude” against the popular visions of hula remained.

While many of the men may have kept their distance from what they considered feminine dance, Nākānelua nonetheless maintained hula forms in the repertoire of movements he taught, though with a “masculine” emphasis. Such was the case with the Moloka’i Ku’i. Nākānelua learned the dance when he was in intermediate school at Maryknoll, where he performed it as a courting dance in which the boys would chase the girls across the stage. In the Hale Mua he changed it to reflect more of the tough, aggressive positioning that would speak to other men:

If you talking about, you know, trying to impress a woman, then your movements are, you know, kinda gallant, yeah, and prancing. ... If you’re a man, and you wanna make an impression on a man—whether it be a boss, or a coach, or guys on a team dat you wanna be a part of and stuff, you know—den you gotta crank up yo’ testosterone, you know, you gotta show up yo’ balls, you gotta be there. So, when dat ‘a’ano [attitude] comes out of you, yeah, your attitude changes, your body motions change, you tend

to stiffen up at different points along da way. A different emphasis on da hand. ... your mana is projected different. (Nākānelua 1999)

Thus Nākānelua did not disavow the hula but rather sought to reclaim it as a practice done by and for Hawaiian men, not for tourists or for women. Again, the focus was on remaking masculinity and doing so through traditions and practices that were real (cf. Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 2013:219–23). Reflecting on the spear dances we had been learning, Nākānelua explained their significance for cultural and historical consciousness:

We come from a culture that was, nothing was written. So history was in the song, history was in dance, history was in the prayer. And the commemorations of things that happened are brought forth, are brought back to life, are relived ... through the dance. ... We thought ... why not do a pahua [spear dance] with a traditional Hawaiian ihe [spear]? ... So we made 'em, and den we danced wit it. And dat was it. No great show, no grand performance in front of throngs of people, just for ourselves. Just to say, we participated in it, just to say we did it, and it was done, it can be done, just for ourselves. (Nākānelua 1999)

Nākānelua was not entirely forthcoming in his statement that there is no show in our activities, for the dances at Pu'ukoholā were certainly done in front of an audience (see Tengan 2008a:ch. 3). Yet his main point about whom these activities were done for is valid: the ritual performance of dance was meant to bring about a transformation of the self by reconnecting with history and with the fellow performers of that collective story. By performing genealogy, ea, and mana, the ritual and embodied processes of the men worked to further the goals of culturally and politically remembering Hawaiian nationhood, which itself was undergoing important changes and transitions.

The Politics of Hawaiian Masculinities: Struggling to Balance Kū and Hina

While the project of transforming and remaking masculinity through ritual holds great promise, it also presents a set of important issues that need to be dealt with. Michael Messner (1997) notes that a variety of men's movements in the United States, such as the mythopoetic men's movement, the conservative white Christian revival of the Promise Keepers, and the African American men's Million Man March are backlashes against feminism that utilize essentialist discourses to reclaim traditional (patriarchal) roles that have been lost. In racialized masculinity

politics, the struggle against race and class oppression often supersedes the struggle for gender equality, and women of color suffer most. Messner argues that the transformative potential of masculinity politics is severely limited insofar as many of the movements end up working to reconstitute patriarchy (1997:73).

As Native Hawaiians move forward in the collective pursuit of reclaiming nation, it is imperative that we take seriously the gender politics that threaten to divide men and women. In an effort to situate the personal and political project of the Hale Mua within the larger context of gender imbalance, I evaluate the extent to which the Hale Mua serves to (re)inscribe a patriarchal order that is not Maoli. In his review of recent Indigenous feminist thought, Scott Lauria Morgensen notes that “Indigenous feminism is key to Indigenous criticism not just for explaining colonialism’s conditioning by heteropatriarchy but because Indigenous feminist practices of articulation are methodologically crucial to transforming settler colonial power” (2011:770). A critical aspect of this evaluative project is to interrogate how masculinity is performed and toward what ends in the contexts of exclusive ritual space vs. secular space. I ask the question, What does balancing Kū and Hina mean in these different sites?

When the Hale Mua gathers for workshops, ceremonies, and training, it provides men a safe space for learning and practicing Hawaiian identity and community in ways that would not be possible in other educational institutions, in workplaces, or at home. In this way there is some resemblance to the mythopoetic men’s movement, which Michael Schwalbe argues is essentially a search for *communitas* among middle-age, middle-class white men who have experienced a type of spiritual bankruptcy as workers in the American capitalist society (Schwalbe 1996, 1998). In relation to the Hale Mua specifically, Morgensen has asked “to what extent [their] methods were informed by a 1990s moment in which mythopoetics addressed perceived failures in hegemonic manhood with a turn to Indigenism, as well as how Kanaka Maoli rearticulated this moment with commitments to decolonization” (2011:771). Though Nākānelua denied any knowledge of the mythopoetic men’s movements, Morgensen’s questions are on point. In the Hale Mua, the activities and discourse focus on men’s relationships to each other and to the family and community more generally. Invocations of Kū are meant to strengthen cultural identity, reconfigure pasts marked by violence, and encourage responsibility and upright moral behavior and leadership as Hawaiian men. The Hale Mua spaces are ritually separated from the normal work and family spheres—the space of (partial) liminality between neocolonial society and the vision of a traditional Indigenous one (see Tengan 2008a:ch. 2; Turner 1969). Ritual process reorders status relationships and allows men to relate in ways that might otherwise not occur given their differences in class, education, geographic mobility, and cultural knowledge. In this context, restoring Kū is about re-memorizing various qualities of masculinity and manhood he represents that are inclusive of the diverse men that come to the Mua. Yet as inclusive as this space is meant to be, the articulation of decolonization with aspects of hegemonic manhood leave open the possibilities for an uncritiqued colonial heteropatriarchy to reemerge in practice.

Leaving the Hale Mua, men reenter a neocolonial order where ritual and ceremonial meanings are vacated and Kū clashes with Hina. In one particularly relevant example, Hawaiian men (not of the Hale Mua) involved in the construction of a traditional thatch house as part of an urban development project prohibited women from participating since house building was traditionally a male activity. Maria Ka'imipono Orr, a Native Hawaiian archaeologist who was an invited guest at the groundbreaking, noted that she and another Kanaka Maoli woman who was one of the regular construction supervisors felt "put out." She exclaimed in an email, "Barring women from building hale or participating in building one, is not only a waste of potential energy, etc., but an act of oppression ... first this seemingly innocent kapu [prohibition] ... then what next! The White, Protestant, males weren't/aren't the only beings on this planet to be oppressive in their dominant thinking and behavior. I feel like we're taking a giant step backwards!" (Orr, email to author and others, March 20, 2001). This example represented a patriarchal assertion of power and authority, for it prevented the participation of women who contributed to the project. The rules of kapu make sense only when they operate as part of a whole structure organized by the logic of Hawaiian kapu. When they are taken out of that system and implemented only in decontextualized and abstracted pieces, friction emerges because the other pieces that made kapu pono (correct) are not there to support it.

Noenoe Silva, a professor of political science and the director of the Indigenous Politics Program at the University of Hawai'i, asks, "Does mana kane [men's mana] have to exclude or oppress women, or be perceived as excluding or oppressing women? What's interesting from my point of view is that the late 19th c. Kanaka men did not seem so very invested in oppressing women—they supported and appreciated the Hui Aloha 'Āina wahine, and went on to support women's suffrage. And they wrote down those awesome stories about [goddesses] Hi'iaka and Papa" (Silva, email to author, May 3, 2001).¹¹ Silva's remarks are accurate, and the historical record does in fact demonstrate that women had access to mana, rank, and power in ways that complemented men's access (Kame'eleihiwa 1999; Linnekin 1990; McGregor 2003). It is also useful to note that the case of the Hui Aloha 'Āina, the men and women each had their own separate organizations and kuleana (responsibilities). I would suggest that this is one of the reasons their leaders could work together when it came to making decisions and organizing mass protests.

Ideology aside, the problem for men of the Hale Mua who are being "cast forward" as leaders is whether or not, or to what extent, their assertion of authority and mana requires a diminishment of women's authority (cf. Hokowhitu 2012). Does Kū rising depend on Hina's lying down? Do they need to be separate categories? When I asked Nākānelua directly, he responded, "Does the Mua advocate for total male dominance of the society, and the suppression of females? ... This Mua doesn't advocate for that. What ... the Mua advocates in regards to the male sex is, it's very important for a male to have a duty and to have a responsibility. ... It gives him a sense of well-being. That's what we're advocating. That a male pick up his responsibility ... the advocacy is not for the suppression of the female spirit."

Though this practice sounds good in theory, we must be wary of the contexts in which “responsibilities” are defined, understood, and practiced. There are echoes here in the discourse found in the Promise Keepers, who similarly advocate for men to pick up their responsibility as men and leaders. This call then gets taken up and used by individual men in a political fashion to support antifeminist and antigay projects through fundamentalist reading of the Bible and a call to return to “traditional” family values (Messner 1997:22–35). Such a model cannot serve to cast our people forward. I find some comfort in the fact that there is no fundamentally patriarchal or homophobic discourse in the invocations of Kū and Hina, though calls for “restoration” of Kū can easily morph into ones for “elevation above” Hina.

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, a professor of anthropology and American studies at Wesleyan University, has posed the following critical questions:

I guess it bothers me that the Hale Mua are attempting to reach for a moment in our genealogy that is seen as more “culturally pure” and measuring it to their status now without accounting for ways they were more empowered under the colonial system than Hawaiian women. Why such a selective genealogy? ... Am I sensing a sort of defensiveness on the part of Hawaiian men? If so, it makes me wonder about potential resentment that may be brewing. ... Is it that men are contesting arguments that posit that Hawaiian women are seen as the primary leaders? Or, that the men agree that women are the leaders and are contesting that leadership and asserting their own? (Kauanui and Tengan n.d.)

The selectivity comes from the present context of the cultural nationalist movement as one that privileges identity and knowledge from the remembered precolonial period, precisely as a means for addressing the current malaise of the neocolonial present. The issue of how or if men have benefited from the patriarchal bargain of colonial modernity is an important one; some have, some have not. Most of the men in the Hale Mua come from working-class families, even if they are currently middle class. Yet for many who now occupy that position, their status has come with (or created) a deep sense of alienation from the community. It is this struggle to reestablish connections with other men and community that leads most of the men to look to older forms of being and acting, forms in which men could still relate in the Hale Mua of old.

However, Kauanui is correct in identifying a certain level of resentment that is brewing. In part, this is a response to women leaders’ discounting of men’s leadership. The level to which discourses in the Hale Mua manifest this sort of reactionary tone varies. Most talk about male leadership tends to be along the lines of claiming responsibility in family and community, and men are less concerned with discrediting women than they are with validating men. There have been times, however, when men have made statements such as “Wahine need to step aside.” This discourse assumes that leadership in the community is a zero-sum game, wherein the

emergence of male leadership requires the removal of female leadership. This amounts to an assertion of patriarchy and reproduces the same structures of oppression and hierarchy that disempower individuals along the lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, body, and so forth. When it emerges, it suggests that patriarchy is what is needed to right society. In my experience, this kind of talk is less frequent than the concern with work, family, and community, but its presence is a cause for concern.

The oppositional nature of discourse on gender works against the establishment of balance and complementarity that we need. On the part of the Mua, one of the shortcomings of focusing only on Kū in the men's discursive practices is that the Hina in each of us is disavowed. The space of the Hale Mua is almost completely heteronormative. In response to my query about the issue of homophobia in the group, Nākānelua responded,

I've seen serious cases of homophobia, and I have not seen that in the Mua. ... We've had homosexuals in the Mua, bisexuals in the Mua, we have metrosexuals in the Mua—we got a pile of them in there and that's ok too. And I haven't heard anybody speak against it. I'll tell you what though ... there was certain issues addressed in regards to understanding homosexuality and certain individuals had a need to understand it, personal issues. ... We discussed it, and it was addressed from a cultural point of view utilizing certain kino lau [manifestations] of certain akua [gods]. For example, you got this whole māhū thing going on, like taro is one male plant, but yet get babies. ... Well, what I look at is culturally ... our kūpuna looked at that as one higher state of being. So, if we're studying this and we're taking a look at this, how is there a fear for homosexuality? You know I don't see it, I don't see it.

His mention of “homosexuals” in the group surprised me, as I assumed all members were heterosexual; however, the fact that they remained closeted suggests that the openness of the Mua was more on an individual than a collective basis. At the 'Aha Kāne Native Hawaiian Men's Health Conference in 2006 (see Tengan 2008a:22), one of the keynote speakers was Hina Wong (later Hina Wong-Kalu), a māhū (transgendered woman) who has emerged as a vocal and visible leader in the Hawaiian education movement and other realms of activism and politics. I was glad that the committee brought her in to physically remind the five hundred men gathered there that Kū did not need to exclude Hina. Yet the reception was mixed; some were enthusiastic, others were put off and walked out. The problems of heterosexism and homophobia (as well as transphobia) in our community are real, even if they are not as pronounced as those in other areas that do not share a (transformed) tradition of acceptance (Tengan 2003). While the 2010 'Aha Kāne succeeded in increasing the participation of young boys, it failed to provide a space for māhū. However, the 2012 'Aha Kāne saw the return of Hina (in body and in discourse), as a panel discussion on māhū featured Hina Wong-Kalu, her Tongan partner Hema Kalu (who

identified as a straight male), and me. Participants there expressed their gratitude for having a space for talking about alternative genders and sexualities, which were still being marginalized but at least were being acknowledged.¹²

I began this exploration of Indigenous performances of masculinity and warriorhood with prophecies that tell of nation building through embodied ritual and cultural action. By reconnecting to these histories and practices, the Hale Mua seeks to re-member ways of being based in mana, ea, and genealogy. I end this essay with another story, also from an earlier time and place (Pukui 1995:8). When Kū the god was living as a human, famine had brought his family to the brink of starvation. He told his wife, Hina, that the only way their children would survive was if he went on a journey. He then stood on his head and disappeared into the earth. Her tears watered that spot, and from it grew the 'ulu (breadfruit) tree whose fruits saved the people. The three Kū images that were reunited in 2010 were carved from this very wood. As Sam Ka'ai noted, "These are the fragments that went away and survived. It would be a great occasion to admire and become familiar again with that which was shaped by our ancestors" (Tengan 2010:14). The return of Kū perhaps signals a new reshaping of our men in the image of our forbears, one that stands tall to provide for the survival and pono (well-being) of our nation.

Still, the 'Ōiwi community has a long way to go toward achieving a real balance of Kū and Hina. Arguments over who has been oppressed more have become unhelpful; both men and women suffered, and differently. The strength of the Hale Mua lies in the work it does with men and the transformations of self in a social context of and for men. The extent to which new understandings of the balance between Kū and Hina may emerge is questionable. Perhaps the metaphors being used are the wrong ones to begin with. Kū and Hina were only two of the forty thousand gods. The hale mua of old was in fact dedicated to Lono, the god of peace and fertility. He too took many forms, including Kamapua'a, the pig god and chief the Hale Mua men also dance of in the Maha'ū. In practice and in ideology, the group has begun to also look toward the different models for thinking offered by male deities other than Kū, such as Lono, Kāne (god of life and freshwater), and Kanaloa (god of the ocean). Hopefully the group will begin to celebrate female deities such as Pele and Hi'iaka as well. The Hawaiian community as a whole has always recognized and celebrated the diversity of being that is manifested in the different body forms of the gods, people, and land, and the fact that moves have already been made in the Hale Mua to explore this diversity is encouraging. Kū and Hina are useful to the extent that they help Hawaiians to reflect on the ever-present struggle to seek balance and complementarity. True, many men feel there is a long way yet to go before men's places or roles are restored, however the nation defines them. Perhaps when the work of rebuilding Kū is done, Kanaka men will be ready to move on to a new embrace of Hina.

Notes

- 1 In this essay I focus only on the Maui group. Around 2005 a group of Hale Mua members living on O'ahu who were originally a part of the Maui group formed their own organization called the

Hale Mua o Kūali'i, which I am a part of. We participated with the Maui group in all of the events described here.

- 2 Teaiwa (1999) coined the term “militourism” to highlight the articulation of militarism (which secures American state power and secures Hawai'i as a place that is open for business) and tourism (which works to both disguise U.S. military occupation and profit from it).
- 3 While data from the 2010 Census is still being analyzed, the social, economic, and health trends do not appear to have changed drastically since 2000 (Kamehameha Schools 2011a, 2011b).
- 4 This calendar is organized primarily around male gods and the chiefly religion of the 'aikapu (sacred eating) that privileged them; women's worship, such as that of Pele on Hawai'i Island, did not adhere to this structure. Some variation in counting the months and celebrating Makahiki has also been noted across the islands. Makahiki today is commonly observed beginning in November and going through February. For more on the Hawaiian division of the year, see Malo (1951:30–36, 141–59). For a political analysis of the juxtaposition of Kū and Lono in the year, see Kame'eiehiwa (1992:44–49).
- 5 In 2003 the documentary *Skin Stories: The Art and Culture of Polynesian Tattoo* aired on PBS. Nākānelua and Nunes (and a number of others from the Mua) were featured in the segment on Hawai'i. The PBS companion site for the film included Nākānelua's own story and his discussion of the Hale Mua (Pacific Islanders in Communication 2003).
- 6 The more common vernacular used in the islands and by most of the men in the Hale Mua is called Pidgin, officially Hawai'i Creole English (HCE). Emerging from the plantation camps and from the need to communicate across language barriers, Pidgin has become a marker of “local” (typically non-white, working-class) identity for people who were raised in Hawai'i. Okamura's (2008:119) survey of 126 University of Hawai'i students found that men claimed to speak Pidgin more frequently than women. This supports my assertion that for men, Pidgin marks a similarly ethnic and “tough” vision of local masculinity. Pidgin has acquired a number of valuations, many of them negative (e.g., Pidgin as “broken” or “bad” English) (Sato 1991; Tamura 2008). However, Pidgin is a legitimate language, and a number of scholars and writers have put enormous effort into validating and maintaining its integrity (Da Pidgin Coup 2008). Most of the men I spoke with used Pidgin to varying degrees, reflecting the HCE continuum today (Sato 1993). For those who spoke Pidgin in interviews, such as Ho, I used an “eye dialect” spelling approach, which is a modified English writing system (the alternate is the Odo orthography, which is a phonetic spelling system).
- 7 By “top of the lists” Haili means the top of the lists of poor life conditions resulting from poverty, described above.
- 8 The translation of “māhū” is difficult, for the term is used colloquially (and not consistently) to refer to effeminate males, transgendered persons, gay men (and sometimes lesbians), and physical hermaphrodites. My usage, derived from the way men in the Hale Mua usually think of the term, is primarily in reference to effeminate males, gay men, and transgendered women (male-to-female); however, the term may also be applied to transgendered men (female-to-male). In their *Hawaiian*

Dictionary, Pukui and Elbert define the term as “homosexual, of either sex; hermaphrodite” (1986:220). Debates over the conceptualizations and place of māhū split the Native Hawaiian community in the months preceding the November 2013 passage of the Hawai‘i Marriage Equality Act, leading *Mana* magazine to run a cover story on māhū in its February/March 2014 issue (Snow 2014). In the essay, Kaumakaiwa Kanaka‘ole states that the appeal of the creative arts and hula for some māhū (including herself) is that “it’s the closest we as a third gender can get to procreation” and that it is a space marked as “noa (free, not taboo)” where certain genres allowed people to “be a little more outlandish ... and acceptedly so” (Snow 2014:27).

- 9 Such appropriations do not go uncontested, though, either in Aotearoa or in Hawai‘i. In a fashion that ironically mirrored the All Blacks’ struggles with intellectual property rights over the “Ka Mate” haka they had traditionally performed (Hokowhitu, this volume; Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002; Tengan 2002), the University of Hawai‘i football team, over half of whose players are Samoan or Hawaiian, found itself in a legal and moral quandary at the end of their 2006 season when it was forced to abandon its use of the All Blacks’ new haka that had been developed and copyrighted directly in response to the Ngāti Toa tribe’s contestation of the All Blacks’ use of their ancestor’s haka (Tengan and Markham 2009). Also, the narrow definition of the haka as a war dance is a mischaracterization; “haka” is a generic term for dances. This mirrors the misidentification of Kū as only “the god of war.” See Linnekin 1997 for discussion of other forms of commodified hypermasculinity, especially on T-shirts sold to both locals and tourists.
- 10 Such a sentiment has been repeated by others who find that the comparison to and emulation of Māori forms has gone so far that Hawaiians try to ho‘omaori (act like a Māori). Interestingly, there is less anxiety surrounding the use of the Marquesan Maha‘ū; I would suggest that this has partly to do with the fact that Marquesans are not held up as the exemplars of Polynesian masculinity in the same way Māori are.
- 11 The Hui Aloha ‘Āina was a Hawaiian patriotic league with both men’s and women’s auxiliaries that was active in organizing against American annexation between the years 1893 and 1898. The epic stories of Hi‘iaka and Papa appeared in Hawaiian nationalist newspapers in the nineteenth century. See Silva 2004.
- 12 In April 2014 a documentary on Wong-Kalu titled *Kumu Hina* (Hamer and Wilson 2014) made its world premiere in Honolulu.

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Spectacles of Citizenship

Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Gets a Makeover

Maile Arvin

In October 2006 the Japanese real estate tycoon Genshiro Kawamoto announced that he would “give away” multimillion-dollar houses in a rich O’ahu suburb to eight “deserving” Native Hawaiian families.¹ He solicited Native Hawaiian families’ stories of hardship, and in response received more than three thousand letters. Kawamoto’s actions were accompanied by a certain kind of welfare spotlight that popular media has turned on Native Hawaiians in recent years. His stated motivation was pure altruism, as the *New York Times* reported: “He said it gave him great joy to provide places to live to hard-working people who had fallen on tough times, which is why he chose Native Hawaiians.”² Soon after Kawamoto’s announcement, the *New York Times* also published an article on homelessness in Hawai’i. The article announced that thousands of predominantly Native Hawaiian homeless were living in tents on beaches, a long-overlooked fact that became a local and national news story as complaints from beach and park visitors increased. Honolulu’s city park director Lester Chang commented, “I think all communities have to deal with this situation, but Hawai’i is unique because it’s an island. ... There’s no place to push them off to.”³

While Chang’s comment classically reveals local officials’ annoyance with the “homeless problem” and their lack of concern about the underlying causes, it also encapsulates the rhetoric of Hawai’i’s island singularity when compared with the rest of the United States. Today Hawai’i’s distinction is being put to use in another market besides tourism. Socioeconomically disadvantaged Native Hawaiians are conveniently placed to become the new causes of so-called philanthropists and network executives alike, fueled by the hyperbole of reality television’s tropes about exotic locales, stiff

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competition, and riveting authenticity. Of course, Native Hawaiians, though statistically overrepresented, are not the only ones among Hawai'i's growing homeless population. However, they are often represented as the most culturally distinct; for the purposes of Kawamoto's "giveaways," for example, the Native Hawaiian homeless were singled out as likely having the "best" stories. Native Hawaiian arts, language, epistemology, and more have certainly seen a renaissance since the 1970s, and this all continues to be a significant source of pride for Native Hawaiians. Yet in the reigning multicultural discourse of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, this cultural difference is simultaneously lauded and depoliticized by mainstream discourse. To the American and Japanese mass media and tourism industries, the recognition of Native Hawaiian cultural difference has always been marketable. In this essay I argue that Native Hawaiian socioeconomic difference is also increasingly represented in popular media, often in spectacular displays of philanthropy, in ways that position Native Hawaiians as "good citizens" who work hard in the American immigrant tradition to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Such narratives require critical attention because they use the rhetoric of multiculturalism to depoliticize and deny Native Hawaiians' status as a historically colonized, indigenous people.

Native Hawaiians are thus continuously saddled with the burden of performing their cultural and socioeconomic difference while at the same time performing good American citizenship. When these simultaneous performances are carried out successfully, from the spectator's perspective, the response can be like Kawamoto's: it gave him great joy to help people who have fallen on hard times. When some part of the performance is not as convincing, usually the failure to demonstrate good citizenship by, for example, not maintaining a job and housing and thereby becoming a taxpayer's "problem," the response is more likely to be the impatient, dehumanizing retort of Lester Chang, the city park director. Echoing the central problem of American settler colonialism assessed by Fredrick Jackson Turner in 1893 as he pondered the significance of the western frontier's close, Chang laments the lack of further unsettled lands: there is nowhere to push the Native or homeless off to.⁴

Into this sociopolitical scene in Hawai'i, critical projects of Native Hawaiian sovereignty thus emerge on a stage fraught with contentions about citizenship and distribution of rights, in the United States as well as any alternative Hawaiian nation. How does one speak as a Native Hawaiian when public discourse writes Native Hawaiians as always doubly "other": as also American, if struggling ones, or as a false minority altogether, opportunistically seizing on distant historical wrongs? This essay therefore seeks to address the ways multiple discourses, each deploying interrelated "economies of looks and looking," to borrow Diana Taylor's definition of spectacle, silence articulations of Native Hawaiian sovereignty that demand land rights.⁵

Specifically, my entry site is another example of what I term "spectacle philanthropy." Echoing the recent home giveaways to Native Hawaiian families by Genshiro Kawamoto, an episode of *ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, aired in September 2007, chronicled the experience of a Native Hawaiian family, the Akanas, receiving a mansion. Beyond reading the makeover show against the grain, I question how Native Hawaiians both resist and participate in perpetuating

skewed “economies of looks and looking” that produce Native Hawaiians as good American citizens. Accordingly the second half of this essay critically engages the Akaka Bill, a legislative vehicle for the federal recognition of Native Hawaiians, and the debates it has provoked. I argue that the Akaka Bill requires many of the same performances I introduced earlier. For the proponents of the Akaka Bill, named for Senator Daniel Akaka, the performance of good citizenship along with cultural and socioeconomic difference should earn Native Hawaiians a settlement package with the United States.

Focusing on how Native Hawaiians are good U.S. citizens simplifies and erases Native Hawaiian indigeneity, especially their unique claims to the land. Prior to 1893 Native Hawaiians in Hawai‘i lived within their own internationally recognized nation-state. In 1848, under an act called the Māhele, private landownership was first enacted under King Kamehameha III, who sought to modernize the country. In 1893 U.S. plantation owners in Hawai‘i, frustrated by the rule of Queen Lili‘uokalani, overthrew the Hawaiian government, and with the support of U.S. naval forces, imprisoned the queen and began seizing control of the Crown’s assets, including land.⁶ In the 1993 Apology Resolution, the U.S. Congress officially acknowledged its role in the 1893 illegal overthrow.⁷ Yet neither the Apology Resolution nor the Akaka Bill, introduced in Congress in 2000, substantially addresses how Native Hawaiians will regain their land rights. Both spectacle philanthropy and compromised government settlements like the Akaka Bill gloss over the legacies of land dispossession—including pervasive homelessness for Native Hawaiians today. Focusing on their good citizenship also denies the fact that Native Hawaiians had no meaningful choice in becoming U.S. citizens.

In many ways, then, the Akaka Bill is analogous to the cases of spectacle philanthropy I examine here. Neutralizing the radical political thrust of the multifaceted Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement, the Akaka Bill can be read as another kind of marketable makeover, one that urgently requires critical intervention. I ultimately argue for understanding the Akaka Bill within a global-historical comparative frame, rather than a solely U.S.-determined one, as many indigenous and other ethnic nationalist movements have historically urged groups to do. This illuminates many more transformative possibilities for Native Hawaiians than those solutions that require settling for the most we can hope for from “philanthropists,” network television shows, or the U.S. Congress.

Extreme Makeovers: Homes, Not Lands

Extreme Makeover’s nationally aired show on September 30, 2007, drew on all of the same tropes that Kawamoto did earlier in the year, but the feel-good hype could go even farther in video format. Much of the show was devoted to displaying, in an unabashedly sentimental style, why the Akana family were the perfect recipients of this new wealth. Momi Akana, the family’s mother, runs a nonprofit called Keiki ‘O Ka ‘Āina (literally, “children of the land”), which provides

educational programming and other social support to Native Hawaiian families. As the show repeatedly referenced, when Akana started the nonprofit eleven years earlier “she used her food stamps to buy snacks for the center, which she operated out of her home until recently, leaving it in a state of disrepair.”⁸ The show provided viewers with intimate portraits of the Akana family, which revealed an enduring and humble “aloha spirit,” as well as a rapid tour of the Hawaiian Islands as the show’s team sought inspiration from the natural landscape as far away from the family’s home in urban Kalihi on O’ahu as Volcano National Park on Hawai’i Island.

Viewers claimed that their enjoyment of the show was in its delivery of justice: the good citizen achieving the material rewards of the American dream. The show was publicized in the local newspapers and news channels months before it actually aired, and locals lined up hours early to see the house’s unveiling. One of these onlookers was quoted saying, “It gives people hope that if you make the right choice and do the right thing, you’ll be rewarded.”⁹ Thus while *Extreme Makeover* seized on the Akana family as especially deserving Native Hawaiians, the familiar heart of their story is an emphasis on the “pulling yourself up by the bootstraps” narrative, on which the image of the justly rewarded U.S. citizen (especially the hardworking, self-made immigrant citizen) was founded.

That the Akanas are Native Hawaiian is referenced in the introduction to the family, but despite the family’s own marking of Hawaianness in the show’s interviews, this becomes ultimately less important than the general sense that they are part of Hawai’i’s much lauded “friendly” and multicultural landscape. As often happens with Native Hawaiian issues, the history of particular Native Hawaiians is glossed over as part of the “local” Hawaiian scene that is largely defined by Hawai’i’s majority Asian American population. For example, in keeping with the typical narrative of the *Extreme Makeover* series, the key fact that Momi Akana’s work particularly serves other Native Hawaiians is less important in the show’s portrayal than a simple understanding that she does community welfare work. Why Native Hawaiians require such community welfare programs goes unexamined, and thus viewers—many of whom we can assume know very little of Hawai’i and its history apart from the United States—are left to fill in such gaps themselves or simply ignore such concerns while consuming the feelgood display of the aloha spirit and good citizens receiving their just rewards. Yet average understandings of race or “minorities” in the United States cannot be accurately applied to the Hawaiian context. Reading the Akana family as part of the local multiethnic landscape of Hawai’i misses the historical and contemporary particularities of both Native Hawaiian and Asian American lives.

The incredible scale of the Akana’s new 3,500-square-foot house, built in a week using more than four hundred volunteers, also blurred the question of landownership, which the show raised subtly but never directly. The urban plot of land where the family’s previous house was located was too small for the crew to build as they wanted to. So while the old house was nevertheless gratuitously demolished, the new one was built on acreage owned by Momi Akana’s profit organization. Although the costs of the new house (and a new office building for Keiki ‘O Ka ‘Āina) were kept secret, the new home’s location on land owned by a nonprofit has raised tax

complications. The *Honolulu Advertiser* reported on the attorney general's investigation: "The organization is working with the attorney general's office to come up with a lease agreement in which the rents are set at market rates. Under state and federal laws, terms of the lease must be at market rates or they could be considered 'a private benefit,' which could result in significant fines."¹⁰ Thus *Extreme Makeover* becomes another example of a giveaway that, on closer investigation (as Kawamoto's giveaways were in actual terms limited to a rent-free lease of ten years), is actually not one.¹¹ Because the Akana family does not own the land beneath their new home, and presumably because the show's producers did not budget for the extremely high price of land in Hawai'i, the family may be required by law to pay rent. Symbolically, paying rent also fits the profile of a good American citizen. In the increasingly pervasive antiwelfare and anti-affirmative action discourses disseminated by political conservatives in the United States, outright gifts of lands and homes would lead to unfair entitlement and laziness among Native Hawaiians. Thus by paying rent or eventually needing to find another place to live, the Akanas and the families assisted by Kawamoto will continue to work hard for their livelihoods, thereby fulfilling their roles as proper American citizens.

In both Kawamoto's giveaways and the *Extreme Makeover* show, the historic loss of land rights for Native Hawaiians was largely skirted both by the philanthropic givers and the media coverage that surrounded each case. The response to the show was overwhelmingly positive, and though Kawamoto's case drew some skepticism, it was largely from Kahala residents (a much wealthier and exclusive neighborhood than the Akana's Kalihi) who complained of Kawamoto's poor upkeep of his properties and suggested this "publicity stunt" was a ploy to further drive down property values in the area.¹² Lee Cataluna, a local playwright and columnist, was one of the few respondents, in her regular *Honolulu Advertiser* column, to focus skepticism of Kawamoto's giveaways on how Native Hawaiians were being represented. She questioned the naming of Kawamoto as a philanthropist to Native Hawaiians: "That title assumes an unpalatable belief: that Native Hawaiians could not manage movin' on up to the East side without an act of charity from a benevolent outsider. ... Does selecting a handful of low-income, plenty kids Native Hawaiian families to live in his expensive mansions make Kawamoto a friend or foe to the race and to the cause? Is this a hand up, a hand out or an insult?" Cataluna went on to criticize the extent of Kawamoto's charity and point out the misnomer of the "giveaway." Bringing up the omitted issue of land rights through actual property ownership, she referred to the overburdened Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL): "If Kawamoto truly wants to get Hawaiians back into Kahala, he should give away the houses. Certainly Micah Kane at DHHL would be happy to add Kawamoto's properties to the assets of the homelands."¹³

While Cataluna's column was significant in its attempt to turn the tide of publicity away from a reification of Native Hawaiian neediness being remedied by benevolent outsiders, her gesture toward the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands as a more reputable source for bettering what she characterizes as the Native Hawaiian "cause" can be questioned as well. Indeed as Kēhaulani Kauanui has detailed in her book *Hawaiian Blood*, the Hawaiian Homestead Commission Act

that created the DHHL in 1920 as a federal project of rehabilitation of Native Hawaiians is shot through with many of the same contradictions as the examples of spectacle philanthropy I have discussed.¹⁴ Instead of granting Native Hawaiians land for the exercise of indigenous sovereign rights (as the United States did for some Native American groups on the U.S. mainland), or granting individuals the land in fee simple (as the 1862 Homestead Act did for white Americans seeking to move west from the Northeast), the Homestead Act leased homesteads to Kānaka Maoli for ninety-nine years at a time. Then, as today, there was no way to ever officially own a Hawaiian homestead. Instead as an effect of the de facto “ward of the state” relationship Native Hawaiians came to have with the United States, the land is continually held in trust by the state and federal governments.

Kauanui thus persuasively argues that, in lieu of returning land to Native Hawaiians, the Homestead Act “returned” Native Hawaiians, who in the early twentieth century were increasingly making up the burgeoning population of Honolulu’s slums, to “remote lands with poor soil and with little water or infrastructure for homesteading by Kanaka Maoli.”¹⁵ Like the isolated cases of the giveaways described above, homesteading did (and continues to do) little to move Kānaka Maoli toward broad socioeconomic equality with white settlers. As Kauanui argues, the Homestead Act instead “institutionalized a form of racial segregation for ‘native Hawaiian’ lessees who occupied the allotted territories that make up Hawaiian Home Lands on the margins of society.”¹⁶

My point here is not to disparage the very real significance of Hawaiian homesteads to Kanaka Maoli families that lease them — indeed, as Lee Cataluna points out, these homesteads are often treasured, as the number of homesteads available falls drastically short of the large numbers of Kānaka Maoli who often wait decades to receive them. Nor do I doubt the significance of the new homes to the families who have received them from Kawamoto or *Extreme Makeover*. My own reaction to the Akanas’ experience, as for many other Native Hawaiians I spoke to about it, was pride, especially because it enabled Keiki ‘O Ka ‘Āina to expand its programming in exciting ways for the Kanaka Maoli community. My point is simply that transformative social justice for Kanaka Maoli as a collective will require, as a basic starting point, land rights rather than questionably philanthropic leases. This will also require understanding of Kanaka Maoli as indigenous people rather than victims in need of rehabilitation and charity, with a history that cannot be flattened into the multicultural image of the United States as a nation of immigrants. These acknowledgments in conjunction with a discussion of land rights are what could shift the power in the existing spectacle made of Native Hawaiians’ poor socioeconomic status toward more equitable “economies of looks and looking” in which Native Hawaiians have more say over both their representations and their rights.

Accordingly the representations of Native Hawaiians conjured by *Extreme Makeover* and Kawamoto beg further questioning and intervention. How is it that the Native Hawaiian objects of these spectacular philanthropy cases were successfully portrayed as special *and* ordinary; as distinct culturally, economically, and physically *and* simultaneously all-American; as needy

and deserving of extravagance? When we look at other representations of Native Hawaiians in national media, such as those created by conservative politicians who argue that Native Hawaiians do not deserve “special treatment,” we find the same racialized binaries but deployed in a wholly different polemical field. The same binaries rigidly enforced can no longer be transcended, and thus the category “Native Hawaiian” becomes untenable and, in some eyes, broken entirely: the trope of the vanishing Native is deployed to disprove Kanaka Maoli authenticity altogether.

Citizenship and the Akaka Bill

On October 24, 2007, the Akaka Bill passed in the U.S. House of Representatives, sparking a familiar round of backlash against the possible federal recognition of Native Hawaiians as indigenous people with the right to self-governance. In the *Washington Post*, for example, the conservative pundit George Will published a column likening Native Hawaiians to Nazis, ostensibly because the bill would allow the new governing entity to decide, as the Nazis decided who were Jews, the potentially racially exclusive criteria for its new Native Hawaiian membership.¹⁷ As the ethnic studies scholar Denise da Silva would say, conservative critiques of the Akaka Bill discursively deploy racialized strategies of both obliteration (i.e., the belief that colonialism has either killed or whitened through miscegenation every Native) and engulfment (i.e., the purported potential for every race to become American).¹⁸ The assumption is always that authentic Native Hawaiians have long since ceased to exist, and even if they do exist, it is their own failing for not yet having chosen to assimilate.

Arguments like Will’s have circulated with the Akaka Bill since its introduction to Congress in 2000 and are likely to continue. As it has for nearly a decade now, the Akaka Bill stalled in the Senate after its passage in the House in 2007. Senator Akaka has consistently responded to such attacks with a paradoxical insistence on Native Hawaiians as true-blue Americans. In a November 2007 editorial published in the *Washington Times*, Akaka and one of Hawai‘i’s representatives, Neil Abercrombie, responded to George Will’s attack: “The Akaka bill doesn’t divide Americans. Today’s Native Hawaiians are proud citizens of the United States. They work hard. They raise families. They pay taxes. And they have been front and center in the ranks of our military for decades. ... Until recently, the measure was never partisan in the House. ... We hope it will not be partisan in the Senate. It has never been partisan in Hawaii.”¹⁹

Here the incontrovertible truth of Native Hawaiians working hard, raising families, and paying taxes is used to place them as good American citizens. The legal scholar Nan Seuffert has argued, with a focus on the settler colonial context of New Zealand, that good citizenship is “the fulfillment of dual individual and national interests, sometimes overlapping.”²⁰ Similarly Akaka and Abercrombie focus only on an image of Native Hawaiians fulfilling their lives in harmony with their duties as U.S. citizens. Erased are the many Kānaka Maoli who do not consider themselves U.S. citizens and view the Akaka Bill as another legislative act (in line with Hawai‘i’s

annexation in 1898 and statehood in 1959) by the U.S. government that assumes, without substantial recourse, Kanaka Maoli consent to American hegemony.

Understanding how the Akaka Bill would recognize and foster “good citizenship” for Native Hawaiians is somewhat difficult to grasp, especially with a sole focus on the text of the bill itself. Nevertheless it is important to see what the bill says and, just as important, does not say, to understand how it has become an unavoidable referent in the contemporary Native Hawaiian political sphere today.

First introduced to Congress in 2000 by Senator Daniel Akaka, the legislation was officially labeled a process determining “Native Hawaiian federal recognition” and claimed “to express the policy of the United States regarding the United States’ relationship with Native Hawaiians.”²¹ The background and purpose of the bill is framed by an overview of Hawaiian history before and after Euro-American colonial contact, with particular reference to the 1993 Apology Resolution.²² The Apology includes an important disclaimer: “Nothing in this Joint Resolution is intended to serve as a settlement of any claims against the United States.”²³ This acknowledgment without an immediate attempt at rectification was nonetheless something of a victory for Native Hawaiians, coming on the heels of many rallies in 1993 commemorating and reinvigorating the resistance that never died out during the one hundred years since Hawai‘i’s overthrow. Many Kanaka Maoli scholars and activists recognized it as a starting point toward justice.²⁴ Although the Akaka Bill also includes the disclaimer “Nothing in this Act is intended to serve as a settlement of any claims against the United States” (amended in the 2009 version to add “or to affect the rights of the Native Hawaiian people under international law”), it does ostensibly pick up where the Apology Resolution left off. It is precisely the terms on which the Akaka Bill seems to be a settlement of claims that make the legislation unacceptable to many, and require a closer examination.

The content of the Akaka Bill is largely an outline of bureaucratic offices that the legislation would establish. These include an office of special trustee for Native Hawaiian affairs in the Department of the Interior, a Native Hawaiian interagency task force composed primarily of officials from “each Federal agency that establishes or implements policies that affect Native Hawaiians,” and a Native Hawaiian interim governing council “for the organization of a Native Hawaiian Governing Body.”²⁵ The major task of the interim governing council would be to establish a roll delineating the “adult members of the Native Hawaiian community who wish to participate in the reorganization of a Native Hawaiian governing body.” While the legislation is careful to state that the proposed governing body will eventually be granted the right to establish its own criteria for Native Hawaiian membership, the initial roll includes those who can prove they are

- (A) the adult members of the Native Hawaiian community who wish to become members of a Native Hawaiian governing body and who are the lineal descendents of the aboriginal, indigenous, native people who resided

in the islands that now comprise the State of Hawaii on January, 1, 1893, and who exercised sovereignty in the Hawaiian archipelago, including the area that now constitutes the State of Hawaii, as evidenced by (but not limited to) –

- i. genealogical records;
- ii. Native Hawaiian kupuna (elders) verification or affidavits;
- iii. church or census records; or
- iv. government birth or death certificates or other vital statistics records; and

(B) the children of the adult members listed on the roll prepared under this subsection.²⁶

What is notable here is that the Akaka Bill attempts to sidestep issues of blood quantum that the federal government itself helped to establish in previous acts, especially the Hawaiian Homestead Commission Act of 1920, which limited leases to Native Hawaiians with verifiable 50 percent or more Native Hawaiian blood.²⁷ Legacies from blood quantum policies have produced contentious racial and gendered divides and are the subject of battles in and outside of courts in the Native Hawaiian community. The Akaka Bill thus does not specify a minimum “fraction” of belonging, but it does require some verifiable genealogical link. It limits initial membership in the Native Hawaiian governing body to “the lineal descendents of the aboriginal, indigenous, native people” residing in Hawai‘i at the time of the 1893 overthrow. However, simply because it remains linked to definitions of “aboriginal, indigenous, native” (no matter how loosely defined, in contrast to blood quantum restrictions), the Akaka Bill has drawn consistent attacks from the Republican Right, alleging that the creation of “race-based” governments in the United States is fundamentally unconstitutional. The bill’s supporters point opponents to the existence of Native American governments as precedents, but to no avail.

The other main conservative argument against the Akaka Bill is that it will allow casino development by Native Hawaiians in Hawai‘i, under the same federal laws that allow gaming for Native American tribes. This is an argument used by politicians such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, who boosted his election campaign to become governor of California by proclaiming that he would not pander to “Indian casino tribes play[ing] money politics in Sacramento.”²⁸ Locally the gambling threat was deployed along two fronts: first, there was fear that the Akaka Bill would legalize gambling in Hawai‘i but limit gambling rights to Native Hawaiians; second, there was fear that a new casino market would compete with established tourism venues in Hawai‘i. This line of opposition led the legislation to be revised in 2006 with a clause pointedly outlawing casinos: “Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the Native Hawaiian governing entity to conduct gaming activities under the authority of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.”²⁹

This change did little to quell Republican opposition. However, likely because of the drastically changed power dynamics in Congress after the 2008 election, this clause was initially dropped in a subsequent version of the bill. An editorial in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* suggested that dropping the clause was key to Native Hawaiians achieving justice. Tellingly, however, the *Star-Bulletin's* support of gaming rights for Native Hawaiians locates the exercise of those rights outside the state: "Tribes received nearly \$30 billion in casino revenue in 2006, according to the National Indian Gaming Association. The Akaka Bill could provide a lucrative source of revenue to Hawaiians by opening casinos in mainland states that allow gambling. The federal regulatory act does not allow such activity by tribes in states, including Hawaii, where gambling is illegal and should remain that way."³⁰

Justice for Native Hawaiians curiously requires fueling, rather than making efforts to reverse, the Native Hawaiian diaspora to the mainland United States by positing establishment of casinos in the states where it is legal as Hawaiians' best opportunity. This vision for Native Hawaiians' future contrasts seriously with most Kānaka Maoli epistemologies that rely on a connection with (not necessarily ownership of) the land of the Hawaiian Islands, an epistemology that Noenoe Silva, among many others, refers to as *aloha 'aina* (literally, "love of or care for the land").³¹ The vision of outsourcing Native Hawaiian casinos also requires Kānaka Maoli to further participate in American settler colonialism by quite directly settling in Native American lands and competing with Native American casinos. The back-and-forth nature of the gambling issue reemerged when the bill's reintroduction to Congress in March 2009 included the text of the 2006 ban, thus making the issue of casinos in Hawai'i or the U.S. mainland moot once again.³²

A key point on which the Akaka Bill has consistently remained silent is in fact the issue of land rights in Hawai'i, which, like Native American reservations or the land rights given to Alaska Native corporations, could provide a more meaningful base for sustaining Native Hawaiian communities. Haunani-Kay Trask addressed this oversight, which she saw replicated in debates on the bill and is not reflective of the concerns of a broad Native Hawaiian community:

Hawaiians need to be included in the federal policy on recognized native nations on our own terms. ...

What Hawaiians need is power: the power to reclaim ceded lands,³³ all entitlements that accompany them, and substantive recognition as a self-governing nation.

In other words, Hawaiians need sovereignty on our own land base in our own country run by our own elected representatives. We do not need the latest version of a paper nation railroaded by the congressional delegation and their hand-picked Hawaiian collaborators. Hawaiians must oppose the current Akaka bill. If passed, it will be the death knell of any native claim to land and self-government.³⁴

Trask represents one of the many radical Kanaka Maoli sovereignty leaders who advocate rejecting not just the Akaka Bill as proposed but the very terms on which the Akaka Bill rests. She argues instead for “recognized native nations on our own terms,” which can be addressed by federal policy but not as a tokenized “paper nation” that enacts no substantive changes to Native Hawaiian communities. Trask and one of the groups she is associated with, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, argue that the proper venue for Native Hawaiian recognition is at the international, not the U.S. national, level.³⁵ Similarly I argue that the frame for shaping scholarship and political practice for Kānaka Maoli must extend beyond a U.S.-centered frame in order to undiscipline the colonial order that too easily becomes totalizing.

Situating Native Hawaiians Globally and Historically

Hawai‘i has been overdetermined by a history and ongoing presence of U.S. settler colonialism to the extent that, as the intricacies of the Akaka Bill demonstrate, Native Hawaiian political and cultural subjectivities are constantly shaped in relation to, or in distinction from, American ones. A central problem in analyzing these subject formations emerges from this same overdetermination. In the extensive history of violent epistemological and material shifts enacted variously by business interests, culturally driven ideologies, and governmental policies, all shaped in and by the United States, the United States remains a seemingly unshakeable referent. This creates U.S.-determined temporal and geographical boundaries that make it difficult to assess the situation of Native Hawaiians within the interrelated processes of global capitalism that continue to shape Hawai‘i and the United States in drastically uneven ways. As Cedric Robinson writes, limiting a study’s perspective to national boundaries of time and space mistakes the “*ordering* of things,” chronologically or spatially, for the autonomous “*order* of things.”³⁶ How can these bounded frames be unlearned and, in a meaningful and lasting sense, undisciplined?

Tracking the aggregation of a global black radical tradition, Robinson’s answer was to understand that the “institution of American slave labor could not be effectively conceptualized as a thing in and of itself.” Instead he situated slavery as “a particular historical development for world capitalism.”³⁷ For him, this approach reflected not only macroprocesses at the level of finance capital and international political battles, but the “lived legacies” of black people. More recently Denise da Silva has formulated a broader critical intervention into all studies of race, nation, and culture by positing a framework of global-historical analysis:

Throughout the twentieth century, under the rule of the principle of nationality, I contend, both former European colonial powers and the others of Europe (on the American continent, in the colonies of Asia and Africa, and in other areas never under official colonial subjection) deployed the

historical signifier (the nation) and the global signifiers (the racial and the cultural) to write their particular version of the subject of transcendental poesis. Neither the citizen, the “individual,” ... nor the national subject ... can describe them because the political things inhabiting the contemporary global configuration are global/historical subjects.³⁸

Crucially Silva emphasizes that the impact of such a global-historical approach beyond only national or universal “human” frames is not to produce and celebrate “better historicity” but to use historical materialism toward a “critique of modern thought, a delineation of a social ontology that more productively challenges both the *scene of regulation* ... and the *scene of representation*.”³⁹

In relation to my own study, the Akaka Bill is styled on the scene of regulation in the sense that it argues for regulatory adjustments: formal, legal, and bureaucratic justice (its own “self-government” and thus its own national-historic signifier). This is a call for better historicity (that is, in this case, recognition and redress of past injustice), which is not unique to supporters of the Akaka Bill, though other Native Hawaiian claims have radically different conceptions of just what “better historicity” would require. However, this project also heavily depends on logics developed on the scene of representation—a proclaimed need for Native Hawaiian culture and race to find a place at the First World table. Thus the Akaka Bill’s ultimate goal of providing Native Hawaiians with a national-historic signifier (Native Hawaiian self-government) is inextricable from the goal of reformatting Native Hawaiian racial and cultural signifiers so they can finally inhabit the transcendental, transparent subjectivity that has been wielded against them for so long.

To take seriously Silva’s critique requires more than attention to the pitfalls of the formal, macropolitical processes in which Native Hawaiians and the Akaka Bill are imbricated. It also requires tracking how racialized and multicultural projects are used, in ways both obvious and subtle and by white and Asian settlers as much as Native Hawaiians themselves.

Understanding the Akaka Bill and representations of Native Hawaiians as objects in need of rehabilitation or makeovers thus requires an account of the global neoliberalism developed in the late twentieth century. As nation-states have increasingly cut funding to public social programs, privatization has made former rights, to things like affordable health care and education, privileges available only to a select few. A nonprofit industrial complex has also arisen under neoliberalism, and the available state and private funds for nonprofit projects often force nonprofits to depoliticize their goals.⁴⁰ Again one must prove good citizenship, even if the programs are part of the new nonprofit “shadow state” rather than the nation-state directly.⁴¹ The price of such a structure is that projects that directly critique the nation-state or model themselves in ways other than as good citizens must struggle to survive. Neoliberalism has created and substantially structured the projects of nonprofits like the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (one of the Akaka Bill’s main supporters) through the employment of global and

historical signifiers, including racial, cultural, and gendered signifiers in addition to the national ones. The impacts of such policies, illumined by this comparative global frame, are poised to reconfigure not only Native Hawaiian lives and identities, but also broader understandings of both citizenship and indigeneity, and thus require further study.

Alternative Models of Kanaka Maoli Citizenship

It is important not to overstate what may seem like the totalizing force of the Akaka Bill in shaping the sphere of Kanaka Maoli politics. Notably the concerns that have determined the shape of the bill's content — state recognition, casino rights, and racial battles over membership— are not at the forefront of, or anywhere mentioned in, the organizing goals of many Kanaka Maoli groups dedicated to political and social change. Judy Rohrer, in a critical discussion of the *Rice v. Cayetano* lawsuit, argues, "Precontact Kānaka Maoli did not think in terms of race and certainly never asked to be 'raced.'"⁴² She sees an untangling of the mess caused by the race-baiting tactics of those like George Will and blood quantum issues as vital to the survival of Native Hawaiians. "A primary goal of decolonization," Rohrer asserts, "is (re)discovering community-based definitions of one's group and trying to make a place for them in neo-or post-colonial societies."⁴³ I would argue that redefining one's group (e.g., substantially overturning what Kauanui calls the "bloody mess" of blood quantum politics) must be a project that works in tandem with redefining the goals of a community's political praxis. While this essay does not pretend to have the blueprints to achieve such broad redefinitions, I end by looking at some of the ways Native Hawaiian political action has historically oriented and continues to orient itself by goals that go far beyond state recognition. I will focus on two historically significant Kanaka Maoli organizations: Kōkua Hawai'i (operating in the 1960s and 1970s) and Ka Lāhui Hawai'i (at its most visible in the 1980s and 1990s). The first positioned itself on a very local level (though it drew inspiration from Native and ethnic national movements in the mainland United States); the latter positioned itself strategically on an international scale. I argue that each provides important orientations for contemporary Kanaka Maoli political movements opposed to the Akaka Bill.

Haunani-Kay Trask cites the formation of the Kōkua Kalama Committee in 1970 as "Hawaiian history ... being made. ... By 1980, activists would look back and see in Kalama Valley the first land struggle of modern Hawaiian resistance."⁴⁴ The Committee was formed to protest the development of high-cost subdivisions in Kalama Valley, for which developers bulldozed the farm houses of many Native Hawaiian (and non-Native) residents. Although the protests were ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the development of Kalama Valley, the Kōkua Kalama Committee had succeeded in drawing much support and attention to their cause.⁴⁵ This spurred them to reorganize into a broader structure named Kōkua Hawai'i in 1971. With the goal of leading anti-eviction and other land rights struggles across the state, Kōkua Hawai'i was inspired by and modeled after the political strategies used by the Black Panthers in the mainland United States.

Fighting institutional racism even among Native Hawaiian organizations was a key component of Kōkua Hawai'i's plan, as Bishop Estate (a wealthy nonprofit charitable trust founded on the assets of the Native Hawaiian Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop) officially owned the land that Native Hawaiians were being evicted from. Though the group was inspired by the Black Panthers, the particular manifestation of institutional racism and colonial legacies in Hawai'i centered on issues of land and environmental rights. Kōkua Hawai'i published a full-page ad detailing their plan of action in the *Honolulu Advertiser* in 1971:

- 1 We must save our farm lands to grow food. We must stop the developers who want to pour concrete over everything.
- 2 We must stop people from moving here until we can first take care of our own local people's needs.
- 3 We must take care of our air, land, and water. If we kill water, nature will kill us.
- 4 We must get back our land from the few big landholders that have almost all of it. It was stolen from us in the first place.
- 5 We must use our land to house and feed our people and learn to rely on ourselves to do it—not on the mainland.
- 6 As a start, we demand that Kalama Valley be saved for the local people and that the tourist and high-income development planned by Bishop Estate and Kaiser-Aetna be stopped.⁴⁶

There is no vagueness or possible overture of compromise in the demands Kōkua Hawai'i states here: land must be returned; land must be used to feed and house our people; local communities must become self-sustaining. Also the emphasis on environmental issues and local people's needs are not limited to the good of Native Hawaiians. Rather it is clear from their publishing their manifesto in the *Honolulu Advertiser* that forwarding the cause of Native Hawaiian land rights is best for the entire Hawai'i community. The use of the term "locals," encompassing both Native Hawaiians and non-Native longtime residents of Hawai'i, as a collective identity in organizing like this changed slowly later in the 1970s. Trask notes that under this shift "the rights of 'locals' were not thereby opposed. But Hawaiians' historic and cultural claims to the land as the *first* and *original* claimants were increasingly seen, at least by Hawaiians, as primary."⁴⁷

This ethos of pushing Native Hawaiian demands to the forefront of political organizing, also modeled after the Native and ethnic nationalist movements in the mainland United States, would come to shape other seminal Native Hawaiian political actions, such as the 1976 occupation of Kaho'olawe, the smallest of the eight major islands in the Hawaiian chain. The U.S. military had used Kaho'olawe as a site for bombing target practice since 1941, directly denigrating the

religious and cultural significance of the land to Native Hawaiians. In 1990 the military finally responded to the continued protests by ending bombing, although struggles against the military there and elsewhere around the state continue forcefully today.

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i (literally, "the Hawaiian nation"), whose membership included many who had participated in Kōkua Hawai'i, was founded in 1987 by a large group of Kānaka Maoli, including activist-scholars such as Mililani Trask. Ka Lāhui became well-known in the early 1990s for taking part in several events that energized the sovereignty movement around 1993, the year marking the hundredth anniversary of Hawai'i's overthrow by American businessmen. Ka Lāhui enrolled eighteen thousand Kanaka Maoli citizens into a government "generally based on the American democratic model with four branches: executive, legislative, judicial, and Ali'i Nui (High Chiefs). The latter have no voting power, but merely advise on matters of traditional protocol."⁴⁸ Proposing a "Nation within a Nation" relationship that consciously draws parallels with the relationship between many Native American nations and the United States, Ka Lāhui sees itself as seating a government in exile and on this basis attends UN meetings to advocate for Native Hawaiians.

Certainly the institutional conditions of possibility for Ka Lāhui Hawai'i's emergence can be located within U.S.-determined structures, just like the Akaka Bill; the United Nations can often do little against the power of the United States. Yet the political program of Ka Lāhui is positioned quite differently from the Akaka Bill and links more directly to the international indigenous movement, described well by Ronald Niezen. To Niezen, the emergent international indigenous movement is a process in which "indigenism involves reinvigoration of the comfort and color of local traditions with the safety-in-numbers effect of a global movement." He goes on to note, "The most common goals of indigenous peoples are not so much individual-oriented racial equality and liberation within a national framework as the affirmation of their collective rights, recognition of their sovereignty, and emancipation through the exercise of power."⁴⁹

This framework of international indigenous solidarity and the strategic leveraging of international coalitions to critique nation-state policies that damage indigenous rights is precisely what Ka Lāhui Hawai'i adopted in the 1990s to increase their visibility. For example, in 1993 Ka Lāhui was instrumental in convening an International People's Tribunal (Ka Ho'okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli), which operated in the tradition of the Russell Tribunal, organized in 1966 to investigate American war crimes in Vietnam by the philosophers Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre. The findings by the Kanaka Maoli Tribunal Komike (Committee), for whom the judges were drawn internationally and represented a variety of indigenous activists and scholars, indicted the United States on several counts, including acts of genocide and ethnocide against the Kanaka Maoli.⁵⁰ It was in part due to Ka Lāhui Hawai'i's actions in the early 1990s that the U.S. Congress in 1993 issued its formal Apology Resolution for the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

My point in summarily reviewing the political history of the Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement is not to characterize it in full but to suggest that the issues most salient to Native Hawaiian communities have changed very little over the past fifty years: land and environmental

rights, community sustainability over development of the tourism industry, self-organized political structures, and international indigenous solidarity. Though the Apology Resolution has signaled little material improvement in the relationship of the United States to Native Hawaiians, and in fact is part of the reason for the Akaka Bill, it was a legal concession that the Kanaka Maoli community had fought for. The Akaka Bill, as a largely top-down strategy aimed at the settlement of Kanaka Maoli claims, is quite a different matter. Today many Kanaka Maoli groups continue to orient themselves by the importance of issues such as land rights, and they value the political traditions of recent history, in addition to (and perhaps inseparable from) the richly lived cultural traditions of Kanaka Maoli. Lisa Kahaleole Hall writes, “In Hawaiian metaphorical terms, we face *forward* toward the past; it does not lie behind us. Far from being inherently regressive, a call to reclaim tradition can open new/old ways of being.”⁵¹ Hall’s elegant description is a reconfiguration of time and ontoepistemology that is a powerful rebuke to the “ward of the state” subjectivities instituted by both the Akaka Bill and the spectacle philanthropy projects with which this essay opened.

As the examples from Kōkua Hawai‘i and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i demonstrate, Kānaka Maoli approach citizenship and nation in multiple ways. These processes make Kanaka Maoli identity much more complex than the representation of Native Hawaiians as good American citizens that is continually advanced by Senator Akaka and other Akaka Bill supporters. Many proponents of the Akaka Bill argue that pursuing a Native Hawaiian self-governing entity at the federal level does not exclude other Kānaka Maoli from pursuing further political action at the international level, such as at the United Nations. Yet critics of the bill argue that once settlements are made with the U.S. government, revising such legislation, especially in regard to land rights, will be difficult. Such arguments are rarely given full respect, however, since the increasingly powerful Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (funded generously by the government and private sponsors such as the Bank of Hawai‘i) lobbies for the Akaka Bill, purporting to be *the* voice of all Native Hawaiians. In Hawai‘i’s nonprofit industrial complex, other Kanaka Maoli organizations that advance models of sovereignty that are more critical of the United States fail to receive similar funding, and thus their voices go unheard, and the Akaka Bill is presented as the only viable option for Native Hawaiians’ future.

This essay does not attempt to summarize the many other approaches to citizenship beyond the historical review I have offered, but I would argue that the growing body of indigenous scholarship today, and especially for this essay Audra Simpson’s inquires of citizenship in Kahnawake Mohawk communities, suggests further productive possibilities for both political practice and scholarship in Kanaka Maoli communities. For even when grounded in legal definitions, Simpson reads Kahnawake “citizenships” on the U.S.-Canadian border and beyond as always extending beyond the legal to constitute a “relentless discursive and living practice that takes on different forms in the everyday life of community.”⁵² This is a gesture not only toward the importance of present everyday practices of Kahnawake; these forms are not necessarily fixed but expect to creatively adapt as current and future challenges require.

For Simpson, the people of Kānawake's self-recognition are shaped by historical legal and cultural understandings of "who they are" as much as "who they would like to be," which requires a complex and contradictory existence that is never only "resistant" nor only "acquiescent" to institutional power.⁵³ Native nationhood in this account is never exactly fixed because for Native people, "remaining who they are" requires a "relentless" practice of negotiating the often damaging notions of what the state would like them to be. For Kanaka Maoli, I have argued, the damaging "economies of looks and looking" instituted by the discourses of good citizenship embedded in both philanthropic home giveaways and the Akaka Bill do require a relentless practice of "remaining who they are." No matter the fate of the Akaka Bill (which many claim is riper than ever for passage under President Obama's administration), Kānaka Maoli will continue to be more than the totalizing picture of victimized citizenry that congressmen and television shows may find easy to present. Kanaka Maoli history and future encompass a much more complex existence that will always be harder to completely and irrevocably overthrow, or in newer terms, "make over," than the discourse of mainstream accounts would have us believe.

Notes

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- 1 I use both "Native Hawaiian" and "Kanaka Maoli" in this essay to refer to the indigenous people of Hawai'i. "Kanaka Maoli" is a Hawaiian-language term for Native Hawaiian. I use the terms interchangeably, but generally the former is used by media and by state, federal, and other institutions, and the latter is more frequently used as a self-identification by activists, cultural practitioners, and scholars. As Noenoe Silva explains, "Kanaka" means "person, people, but also Hawaiian; Kānaka is [the] plural form, Kanaka is singular and the category." Kanaka Maoli means "real person or people, i.e., native." See Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham NC : Duke University Press, 2004), 238.
- 2 Evelyn Nieves, "Giveaway in Honolulu Raises Eyebrows as It Lifts Spirits," *New York Times*, April 1, 2007.
- 3 Janis Magin, "For 1,000 or More Homeless in Hawaii, Beaches Are the Best Option," *New York Times*, December 5, 2006.

- 4 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (New York: H. Holt, 1920), 1–38.
- 5 Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 13.
- 6 For more on these historic events, see Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992); Jonathan Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002).
- 7 U.S. Congress, *To Acknowledge the 100th Anniversary of the Jan. 17, 1893 Overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii ...*, Public Law 103-150, 103rd Cong., 2nd sess., November 23, 1993.
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- 13 Cataluna, "Rock Pools in Kahala for Kanaka."
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- 27 Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.
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- 29 25 usc 2701 et seq.; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2006*, s3064, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., May 26, 2006.
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- 38 D. Silva, *Towards a Global Idea of Race*, 181.
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- 44 Haunani-Kay Trask, "The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement: Kalama Valley, O'ahu," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 12 (1987): 127.
- 45 Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, 67.
- 46 Quoted in Trask, "The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement," 149.
- 47 Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, 67.
- 48 Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, "The Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement," in Churchill, Venne, and Kame'eleihiwa, *Islands in Captivity*, xx.
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Rooted in Wonder

Tales of Indigenous Activism and Community Organizing

Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada & Aiko Yamashiro

On August 9, 2015, 10,000 people marched in Waikīkī. They were a sea of red—the color of our ali'i, our chiefs, the color of 'āweoweo swimming in schools, the color of our blood that has nourished this land for generations. Some marched to speak out against land abuse related to pesticide use and GMO (genetically modified organism) testing; others marched to stop the urbanization of agricultural land. But the vast majority of the people marching, the indigenous Kānaka Maoli and their allies, all of us who call this place home, were marching in support of the sacred mountain, Mauna Kea, to prevent its further desecration.

Throughout the march—and this whole struggle, in fact—we have heard the wondrous names of our akua, our gods: Wākea, Poli'ahu, Mo'oinanea, Kūkahau'ula. The mo'olelo (story, legend, tradition, or history) and practices that Hawaiians have passed on, often mainly within family traditions, were on the lips of the entire Hawaiian community, across our islands, and even on Turtle Island, where some of our family now lives. The movement for Mauna Kea, often seen on social media through the #WeAreMaunakea and #TMT-Shutdown hashtags, has captured the imaginations of our community in a way that no other issue has in decades, some say since the mass mobilization of Hawaiians protesting the overthrow in 1893 and subsequent illegal annexation to the United States in 1898.

Kanaka Maoli stories have persisted through this time of struggle, but we have often been looking to other places for the magic that came with them. Now, our mo'olelo have energized us, awakened us, moved us. Part of it is the awe and wonder that we feel at the top of the mountain. Even if we have not been to the peak of Mauna Kea, we know the awe and reverence of being in such a place: the wonder

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at the dedication of the protectors who have camped on the mountain— as we write this in September 2015, for over six months now¹—in the thin air and cold that comes from being 9,000 feet above sea level, but also the wonder at the power of our collectivity, what happens when we tell our stories and do our chants, in larger and larger numbers across the world. After a day of pule, of chant and ceremony, carried out across the Pacific, during the middle of the hottest July we have experienced in some years, it snowed at the top of Mauna Kea, shutting down the road leading to the telescope's construction site.

What has really set this movement apart is the visibility of the younger generation leading the movement. They are still guided by the kūpuna who have come before them, but it is clear that they are taking the reins in their own hands. The previous generations of activists and others who fought to protect our sacred spaces and revive and maintain Indigenous language and cultural practices set the stage for the emergence of this new generation of politically active and culturally aware aloha 'āina, the deep connection to land that motivates so many of our actions. They are both activists and keepers of story at the same time, recognizing the responsibility that has been given to them with the knowledge of our wonder-filled traditions.

Historically, Indigenous wisdom and wonder have had a fraught relationship with the fields of folklore and fairy-tale studies, cultural anthropology, and ethnography, with Indigenous knowledges being relegated to folk wisdom or fairy tales as a way to undermine their authority in colonial knowledge systems, to make way for colonial projects of modernization or development on Indigenous lands. Critical folklore and fairy-tale scholars, however, have also worked to map the global circuits and world making of these colonial traditions (Naithani) and to repoliticize the power of wonder—a potentially transgressive power of questioning, curiosity, amazement, and awe that call forth “our own active—and even more so, activist—responses to and participation in the process of storytelling and interpretation” (Bacchilega 194). We are grateful for the opportunity to bring the fields of fairy-tale and folklore studies into conversation with Indigenous activist and artistic voices, to see what each can learn from the other, in our shared human struggle against a present where the magic of profit is more important than the physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being of our wondrous peoples; where the advancement of Western knowledge is built on the rubble of our sacred places; where the “highest and best use of land” might mean mining, deforestation, toxic pollution, live bomb testing, and other irrevocable practices of degradation that make the land unable to sustain life; and where over a thousand missing and murdered Indigenous women get less attention than the latest celebrity news.

In this special issue of *Marvels & Tales* we seek to honor and discuss the ways in which Indigenous stories adapt to moments of political and social crisis, live on in ways that sustain Indigenous culture, health, identity, and sovereignty, and engender activism. We begin by acknowledging the ongoing colonial violences that Indigenous people are suffering and the very real stakes of telling stories. By doing so, we are following the lines laid out by a wide range of scholars, for example, Caroline Sinavaiana Gabbard, who highlights in both her poetry and critical

work the importance of Indigenous tradition, performance, connection, and story in interrogating our own gendered identities; Waziyatawin, whose *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives* foregrounds the importance of memory and stories in Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty; Steven Winduo, who recenters the Indigenous in relation to the colonial categories of literary and folk in the service of nation building in Oceania; and Grace Dillon, who advocates for the incorporation of Indigenous “modes of imagination” into genres such as science fiction and fantasy as a commitment to social justice.

In September 2015 we had the opportunity to witness the power and energy of convening these seemingly disparate fields and issues in our work to help organize a symposium titled “Creating Futures Rooted in Wonder: Bridges Between Indigenous, Science Fiction, and Fairy Tale Studies” in Mānoa, O’ahu. Scholars, artists, and activists gathered to share their work and create spaces for collective creation—in the form of writing, visual art, performance, and community-organizing workshops. We traveled across time and ocean, listened to non-English and nonhuman languages, sang old and new songs, and were silent together. We were humbled and inspired by our new connections, encouraging each other to leap into fantastic stories of futures while committing to the difficult and joyous journey to recover and heal our ancestors. The hope and solidarity of that experience nurture the spirit of this special issue.

This special issue offers stories as sustenance and strategy, as decolonial and anticolonial in both contemporary and historical contexts, from Hawai’i to Guåhan to Turtle Island. One thing we learned in the process of putting this issue together was how much unconscious energy and time we spend to legitimate or even validate Indigenous stories in European American colonial contexts. We are still trying to defend what little we have left, still trying to be recognized by colonial statist powers, and this battle is exhausting and demoralizing. But if we start instead from the belief that we are strong and beautiful and that our stories are already valuable, we can offer each other ideas that are more nuanced, more vulnerable, more energizing, more bold. As these drafts grew with each other’s support and encouragement, we moved toward a different kind of storytelling and analysis among Indigenous scholars, activists, artists, and settler allies who come to questions of Indigenous tales of wonder with urgency and commitment.

We are grateful to the strong contributions to this issue from people who fight for their communities and marvel in our collective of rising voices, calling into existence more loving, just, and connected futures. Although each piece stands alone, together they echo and open each other. Lianne Charlie’s stunning artwork invites us into her personal experience about walking through fear to hear her grandmother in the land, the land in her grandmother, and taking on the kuleana, or privilege and responsibility, of telling stories in new ways that awaken curiosity and reconnection back to ancestral Yukon homelands. Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada also explores the importance of retelling stories in new and traditional forms through his translation of an 1893 “legendizing” of a contemporary story of heroism. Brandy Nālani McDougall reminds us to cherish the unruliness of decolonial forces in Hawaiian stories, the sacredness and pleasure of “laughing *with* our ancestors,” a power she describes as “a creative, fierce, sexual, intelligent,

and transformative force that should never be underestimated.” These pieces ask us, What is decolonial and Indigenous recovery and adaptation? Although they trace different strategies, all paths point back to the sacred reconnection of people and land, the powerful immediacy of returning both to the bodies of land and our own bodies full of emotional power.

How, then, do we invite larger communities into that transformative, embodied experience of wonder and carry the work into the future? Candace Fujikane’s narration of a particular land battle over industrial development carefully documents how a social justice bus tour mobilized tales of wonder to grow both Indigenous and settler connections to not only their own storied land but also a whole living Hawai‘i connected by a network of wondrous stories. Michael Lujan Bevacqua and Isa Kelley Bowman offer a committed interrogation of the shifting lives of two different Chamorro stories of wonder, asking us to think about which stories offer the most resilience and support for the battles that lie ahead. As future ancestors ourselves, how can we not only reawaken and reconnect but also create new stories of wonder in our everyday, difficult, and creative work together?

All these contributions attest to the truth that wonder changes us and changes our world. When we stop marveling at ourselves—ourselves in the most connected and expansive sense, that is, we as individuals, as activists, as communities, as past and future ancestors, as gods, as mountains and rivers and ocean—we lose belief in our ability to heal and transform even the deepest wounds. The act of bringing new life to our Indigenous stories reawakens our lands and peoples to remember the power we have always had, to feed our families and strangers, to care for the past and future. Hope is fed by our ability to apprehend and trust our storied connections, by the rush of unexplainable movement, by the unruly growing of our love and gratitude for the strange and marvelous ways we live on.

Note on the Treatment of Hawaiian and Other Indigenous Languages

The editors and contributors who are working with Hawaiian-language texts or concepts have decided to follow the well-established practice of *not* italicizing Hawaiian words and phrases because we do not consider them a foreign language. Authors who used other Indigenous languages were left to decide for themselves how they would handle the textual treatment of their individual languages.

Note

- 1 Update: In December 2015, the TMT’s permit for construction in the conversation district atop Mauna Kea has been vacated due to a decision by the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court. It is unclear yet whether the TMT will apply for a new permit or not.

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Solidarity Work in Transnational Feminism

The Question of Class and Location

Linda Carty & Monisha Das Gupta

Over the last three years we have been having regular discussions about the imperial actions of the United States globally and its inaction within its own nation, which have devastated the lives of poor people, most specifically women and children. In those discussions we have been assessing our responsibilities as academics and transnational feminist activists committed to the struggle for social justice worldwide. To that end, we have been reflecting on transnational feminism as a mode of analysis that attempts to address the kind of action necessary to deal with the various crises that the United States and its imperialist allies have been creating around the world. We have been engaging our students daily about their role in justice work. In our classes, we hear students' hope for change as we simultaneously hear the hopelessness of many in thinking that there is little they can do in the face of what they see as forces of aggression too large for them to tackle. At the same time, we attend and participate in academic conferences where feminist academics ponder the same questions, but often seem paralyzed to come up with answers, even as transnational activists among them point to their own everyday working solutions to these problems. These dilemmas and concerns have brought us to writing this chapter. We begin with an example of the problems with envisioning transnational social justice projects that bridge the academy and communities outside of it.

In 2005, Linda Carty attended a conference at Syracuse University, where she teaches, on the strategic action that is necessary in seeking gender justice around the world. The conference was partly organized as a reflection on the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing ten years prior and the condition of women in the world since then. A central theme of the conference was to examine transnational

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feminism and the politics of transforming feminism. The participants—an eclectic group of activists, scholars, and scholar-activists—addressed, assessed, and analyzed the question of gender justice through numerous lenses of feminism. All the frameworks attempted to interrogate the unequal relations between the global North and South.

The opening plenary generated a discussion of the relationship between activism and the academy. Few envisaged justice as a project that required a merging of the work that is done at both sites or recognized that one could not exist without the other. The more pertinent question of how to organize within the academy, or how to get academics to learn from the activists, though raised, was not taken up. In the final session, participants pondered the question, “Where do we go from here?” It became clear that although much had been discussed throughout the two days of the conference, there was little in the way of strategy and what the next steps ought to be.

A crucial discussion ensued about the effectiveness of the religious Right in mobilizing the working class, women in particular, selling them faith and hope. The ineffectiveness of the U.S. Left to counter such challenges manifested itself at the conference, which did not result in a clear course of action. It was very frustrating for some—both activists and scholar-activists—that the conference did not culminate in some projected concrete action. Linda wondered to herself whether more could be expected from a conference that did not engage the issues of class inequality, the hegemonic privilege of those feminists whose site of struggle is primarily the academy, or the failure of the North to share its imperial hold on most of the world’s resources, even though these questions were raised. Indeed, the glaring vacuum on the class question was present in the room as feminist activists from working-class women’s organizations in the South, such as Red Thread and GABRIELA,¹ pointed to how their struggles have intensified as U.S. imperialist actions, via organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, have put an even bigger squeeze on countries of the South, thereby increasing the difficulties for the poor. The problem is that the U.S. feminists and even some U.S.-based transnational feminists from the South continue to subsume the problem of class within issues of difference and attempt to forge solidarity on the basis of a shared understanding of difference. The opening plenary speaker called on participants of the conference to have the courage to engage in self-critique, transparency, and accountability. The failure to do exactly this resulted from the discomfort and inability to deal with the class question. Therefore, the question of “where do we go from here” could not be answered. Having another conference is certainly not the answer.

We undertake the task of rethinking transnational feminism in order to bring clarity to three conundrums that beset activist scholarship. First, transnational feminism in the United States, despite its focus on capitalism as a global system, elides the materiality of class relations. Second, in its search for transnational spaces for social justice projects, it wrestles with the global/local opposition even though it theorizes the interpenetration of the local and global. The third problem, related to the search for a community, envisioned as grassroots and valorized

in the literature on activism and feminism, engenders a “relationship of handouts,” which we describe later in this chapter. Transnational feminism’s literal interpretation of cross-border work as links with organizations in the South ends up participating in a politics of funding that often exacerbates the inequalities between the North and the South. These efforts at forging transnational connections mirror attempts within the U.S. academy (gown) to reach out to what it calls “the community” (town) through the increasingly bureaucratized forms of service learning.

To navigate the three conundrums, we suggest that transnational feminists exploit their insight of relationality, that is, the ability to make connections between the lives of people based in the North and those who live in the South. This would require tackling the complex and so far elusive questions about the reproduction of class privilege and exploitation in the North in order to identify common struggle with the South. Such an approach allows us to see that so-called local contexts—inside and outside the academy—are thoroughly transnationalized. Thus, the “local” is better framed as the manifestation of the global forces that transnational feminism traces. We can find the transnational within the United States. In other words, to enact transnational feminism we do not necessarily have to find, communicate with, or travel to a site outside our national boundaries. In this way, we learn to focus our activism on state and corporate action in ways that link up with liberatory struggles in other sites against these same forces. With this framework we are better able to effect change without having to enter into a relationship of handouts.

The First Conundrum: Class Relations and Materiality

Tracing the polyvalent transformations wrought by global capital is central to U.S. transnational feminist analyses. To contend with the global scale of capitalism, it hails transnational social movements as one hopeful outcome of globalization. Within transnational feminist scholarship, we find an eloquent elaboration of the deep inequalities between the North and South but a paucity of analyses about class relations in the North, particularly the class politics that arise from the location in the U.S. academy of feminists from the South who, like us, also identify as black women, women of color, or both.

Over the years, we have noticed to our dismay that the racialized category “women of color” functions to stifle discussions about class. In transnational solidarity work, the historical specificity of identity-based struggles within the U.S. women’s movement does not always line up seamlessly with the inducements, also historically rooted, that inform activism based outside the United States. Reflecting on the difficulties of collaborative cross-border work between Mexicanas and Chicanas/Latinas, Teresa Carillo, a Chicana academic and activist, observes: “Part of the daunting nature of the enormity of the task of transnational organizing is that Mexicanas and Latinas have distinct ways of defining their agendas. Chicanas in the United States have focused on race and ethnicity, while Mexicanas have focused on class issues and survival.”² In pinpointing a disjunction between Mexican women’s concerns over economic inequalities and

Chicana agendas that are shaped by racial politics, she diagnoses an evasion of class issues on the part of U.S.-based activists engaged in transnational alliances.

Although U.S. feminists of color, among them transnational feminists, have questioned the category “of color” in terms of ethnic, cultural, national diversity, as well as diversity in histories of racialization, they have not directly addressed the class inflections of these differences. The silence around class relations has become particularly deafening in the case of feminist academics of color who rarely engage with class in the ways in which their forerunners, the founding sisters of black and Third World feminism, did. Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Gloria Anzaldúa, Barbara Christian, Toni Cade Bambara, Angela Davis, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, bell hooks, Merle Woo, Nellie Wong, and members of the Combahee River Collective wrote and talked about the material conditions in which they did academic, political, and creative work. They addressed class relations forthrightly and connected their struggles in the United States to those globally. For them, class was not an abstract or identity category; it was a lived reality.

Within the racial landscape in the United States, the identity space of women of color in the academy has increasingly obscured questions of class and class relations, converting them into questions about identity. Even as feminists of color establish themselves in the academy, they rarely discuss their accountability as privileged women to poor women in the North, who bear the costs of the gross inequalities manufactured by U.S. domestic and international policies. Academic feminism in its many forms, therefore, has not been able to make a radical break from its founding moment, when the white middle-class agendas of second wave feminism got institutionalized. It remains the province of middle-class women, irrespective of race, who find it difficult to connect their lives and their struggles to those of the majority, working-class women.

When U.S. transnational feminists act upon their oft-professed desire to build solidarity, coalitions, and collaborations across borders, they tend to impose their particular preoccupation with difference, collapsing all other issues under this framework. In disassociating themselves from an early moment in second wave feminism, which crafted a highly problematic notion of global sisterhood, U.S. transnational feminists forcefully articulate their opposition to such universalized ideas of women’s oppression. Yet the problem at this moment of the evolution of feminist politics is not so much with the globalization of those U.S. feminist perspectives that promote a universalist standpoint, but with the assumption that U.S. feminism’s preoccupation with certain axes of difference is every feminist’s concern the world over.³ Tracing the gendered configuration of race and class, which get coded as identity categories, *does not* exhaust the analytical directions of feminism.

Because much of the transnational feminist literature on migration in the United States has focused on the cross-border construction of identities to contest theories of assimilation, struggles over identity and the articulation of difference interfere with materialist, rather than culturalist, understandings of class. The development of multicultural feminism in the United States in response to the betrayals of both Marxist-socialist and Third World liberatory visions gets refracted in transnational feminism.⁴ Transnational feminist efforts to bring back culture

to correct crass materialism and androcentric Marxism often obfuscate the material relations of production that give rise to unconscionable poverty and relations of exploitation. This failure to dissect the material relations of class impacts academic feminism's ability to organize and mobilize beyond the university. The politics of race and class in the U.S. academy, then, create a methodological dilemma for transnational feminist scholars. Unable to tackle the issues of class relations in any meaningful way in the North, they displace their desire for social justice on North-South cross-border solidarities and invest much hope in it.

The Second Conundrum: The Local/Global Binary

The question of what forms these solidarities take brings us to the second conundrum. Where does a transnational feminist find the community to do her justice work? In their activism, transnational feminists often struggle to bridge the binary formulation of local and global. As a site of activism, the "community" comes to represent spaces that are small and local. "Global," in this formulation, represents a larger and reified unit that transnational feminists, then, have to bring back to the local. The conceptual gymnastics required to span the local and global create much confusion about the site of activism because activism is constructed as community-based work. On the basis of our involvement with transnational activists, we suggest that we undo the boundaries that contain the local and the global, and its analog, the university and the community, so that transversal activism is not misinterpreted as drawing a path to link two spaces that remain discretely bounded.

Though transnational feminism takes on the task of attending to national borders as well as new social and political fields that traverse nationally bounded spaces, it has not critically examined the mechanisms through which these nationalized spaces are created. Canadian feminist Nandita Sharma astutely pinpoints this failure in the context of post-9/11 border panics in Canada, when she says:

The last thirty-odd years, precisely when feminist (and other) scholarship on nationalism has flourished, is also the time in which a regime of global apartheid has been institutionalized. ... By not paying attention to how people move and how they are legally, socially, economically and politically positioned by the state within nationalized societies, we have failed to understand a significant component of global imperial relations of spatial/social disparities in wealth and power, disparities organized through gendered, racialized and classed relations.⁵

Although critiques such as Sharma's highlight the limitations of feminist analyses of nationalism in that they do not question nationalism itself but its gendered exclusions, they have broader implications.

The curious lack of attention to the “national” in transnational has led to *international* and *transnational* being used interchangeably in transnational scholarship and activism. The *international* conceptually expresses a scale and level that stands above nations, which remain discretely cordoned-off spaces defined through political sovereignty.⁶ The international realm continues to be tied to the development of the modern nation-state, which in the West was powered by slavery, industrial capitalism, and colonialism. Thus, the term *international* remains invested in the mythical intactness of the nation-state and legitimizes various types of violence by accepting sovereignty as axiomatic.⁷ *International* does not capture the transformations of the nation-state wrought by cross-border flows of labor, capital, information, culture, laws, rights, and social justice agendas.

It is critical to understand that *transnational*, unlike the international, is *not* a level of operation or analysis. Thus calls to feminists to organize at the “transnational level” skirt the task of organizing against the various expressions of cross-border flows. We can trace the transnational in the creation of a terrorized and disenfranchised undocumented people to supply cheapened labor in the North, the inventive outsourcing arrangements in the information technology industry that convert labor into an exported commodity on a country’s balance of payments sheet,⁸ the introduction of chemical fertilizers and genetically modified seeds in remote rural areas that we think are untouched by globalization,⁹ or the feminized tea plantation labor that underpins the chai latte sold at Starbucks.¹⁰ In our mind, transnational feminism, to be effective, has to foster a political consciousness about the salience of borders to understand and respond to the interpenetrations that confound the boundedness of national spaces and the political markers of a nation-state.

We were both forced to reexamine our literal understanding of transnationalism in the course of developing our research projects through our activist work. Monisha worked with South Asian immigrant women’s, labor, and queer organizations in the United States, and Linda worked with the Black Women’s Collective in Toronto, domestic worker advocacy groups in Toronto and New York, and HIV/AIDS groups in the United States and the eastern Caribbean.¹¹ Both of us were committed to stepping outside of interpretive frameworks that contained social movements within national boundaries and wanted to trace the ways in which the organizations developed their agendas in reference to the crises in the global South. But few of these groups had actual links with organizations in other national spaces. In Monisha’s experience, although the women’s and queer organizations had contacts with similar entities in India, the United Kingdom, or Canada, the two labor groups did not. None of the groups that Linda worked with knew of each other; they also did not have any connections with women’s groups in the Caribbean, even though some of the domestic workers, particularly in New York, had a past relationship or association with such groups “back home.” Both of us found this acutely disappointing, because our sense of transnational feminist politics at the time had conditioned us to expect such linkages.

As our understanding of the work that these “local” organizations did deepened, we realized that their transnationalism depended not on literal cross-border links, but on their ability to

frame the phenomena they were up against in the transnational flows of labor and capital. For example, South Asian taxi drivers and domestic workers in New York crafted transnational social justice agendas because they saw their predicament as resulting from the economic restructuring of the U.S. economy and the U.S. border controls that have accompanied globalization. In her work with Caribbean domestic workers in the United States and Canada, Linda recognized how divisions between Caribbean nations, “smaller” and “larger” islands, as well as Indo- and Afro-Caribbean immigrants got reproduced across borders even as these women made “friends” with other non-Caribbean women of color who were in the same line of work in the same city. Over the years, both of us learned to recognize and appreciate the transnational dimensions of activism in seemingly localized spaces by learning how the activists defined and contested transnational social phenomena such as immigration, severe class exploitation that is simultaneously gendered and racialized, or disease and the differential access to health care.

The Third Conundrum: Relationship of Handouts

Since U.S.-based transnational feminists desire solidarity with social movements outside their national boundaries and often translate it, as we once did, into establishing connections with groups in the global South, they create relationships that become unequal. Funding becomes essential to sustain these networks, and what concern us are the power relations of these North-South links. Pockets in the global South become the recipient of undoubtedly much-needed material resources and expertise from the North but, so far, not in a manner that in any meaningful way redistributes those resources. Thus we see U.S.-based transnational feminism running the danger of mirroring the dependency of marginalized groups on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have proliferated in the South and the North to replace state-sponsored social-democratic programs that neoliberal policies have cut back. For us, the relationship between transnational capital and transnational struggles against it is not automatic but contingent on the methods chosen to craft those resistances.

The perception that the transnational is a level of operation has led to the reduction of transnational feminist solidarity to networks. Undoubtedly, the transmission and interchange of information are critical to all social movements. In order to build solidarity, transnational feminists have relied on the collapse of time and space facilitated by the information technologies revolution to exchange strategies against state and corporate practices and to learn from the distinct experiences in different national contexts of “global” phenomena such as neoliberal economic restructuring. But it is also this translation of transnational activism into networks that has given rise to a widespread critique of a feminism that is losing its movement roots and increasingly institutionalizing itself within national and international policy arenas.¹² This institutionalization has gone hand in hand with professionalization. Much has already been said about the political economy of international funding that becomes essential for these

networks to remain viable and to continue to carry on their not-so-affordable practices of information exchange through travel and virtual modes. To counter these arguments, it has also been pointed out that networking among activists in the global North and South, such as those who are organizing around sweatshops and free trade zones, has been critical in defending the rights of workers and promoting consumer awareness. Here we need to recall Teresa Carillo's reminder that such collaborations, though energizing, are short-lived and hard to sustain over the long term "because of the lack of resources as well as the differences in the central focus and agenda."¹³

For us, transnational feminism's focus on building networks poses another problem: the pernicious division between the North and the South in thinking about gender equity. The tension that built up to and erupted at the "Seeking Gender Justice Beyond the Beijing Conference" at Syracuse University revolved around positing Beijing as a pivotal moment and the critical referent setting the terms of the conversation. The conference could not but lapse into a language of what is or is not done by the UN on the world stage for women in the South, of course, and what "we" feminists in these arenas need to do to get funding to continue the dialogues in more conferences.

Networks that are successful in the policy arena are mediated by gender equity/human rights agendas set by the relevant arms of the UN. Transnational feminist Manisha Desai testifies to this mediation by tracing its development during the International Women's decade: "In this third phase of the UN's efforts the big shift in focus was on recognizing there would be no equality, development, or peace without women's full participation. It was during this phase that the UN committed resources for women's advancement and created institutions that were to become an important part of transnational feminist solidarities."¹⁴ Beyond the important questions that feminists themselves have raised about access to these transnational networks midwifed by the UN, the elite nature of these transnational solidarities, and the shift away from economic justice toward a more limited agenda for civil and political rights,¹⁵ we want to propose another line of inquiry. As long as the UN interpellates us, how can we meaningfully act on transnational feminism's relational insights that ask us to formulate our activist projects with the acute awareness that lives in the North are entangled with lives in the South through a power-laden web of privilege and oppression?

Although the UN purports to address gender inequities worldwide, the South remains its arena of action as the seat of poverty, hunger, unequal development, illiteracy, poor health, HIV/AIDS, sex trafficking, and a host of gender discriminatory practices. To us this is merely another configuration of the discourse of development that defines the South as deviant and needing correction.¹⁶ In this configuration, the North becomes the more resourceful, knowledgeable, and problem-free partner. Similarly, the conferences that fail to address these problematics, therefore, will replicate the "handout" model. That is, they will always have a few activists from the South whose very presence can do little more than legitimize the already stated goals of the gatherings. The end result of these networking relations is that the activist organizations

get connected to the “right” funding agencies and, inadvertently or otherwise, rewarded for their representational roles.

Simultaneously, the mechanism also works for the transnational feminists in the North for whom activism is the necessary corollary to theorizing. For many feminists who produce endless theories on feminism, an alignment with activist causes and organizations in the South has come to stand in for direct involvement. Such practices replicate class inequality under the cover of activism. In some instances, transnational solidarity is accomplished through the inclusion in conferences of a sprinkling of on-the-ground activists from the South. Their presence lends legitimacy to white progressive feminists and feminists of color. These Northern feminists, in turn, assist their sisters in the South with the support connections that they themselves use in the North and then promote such assistance as feminist praxis. It is in the context of these problematic gestures that one of the Syracuse University conference participants from the global South cautioned against Northern feminists tapping activists from the South to provide fodder for the next research project, the next grant, and the next edited volume. These feminists then go on to make theories based on the experiences of the activists and forward recommendations that are not consultative, thereby violating the solidarity to which transnational feminism is ideologically committed.

Against such practices, we offer a more humble conceptualization of transnational feminism in which academics and scholar-activists in the North learn from the organizing experiences of the displaced and impoverished women in the South in order to mobilize our own communities devastated by advanced, postindustrial, and service-oriented capitalism. We learn to understand that the social injustices in the South that incense us are tied to policies of our own governments acting in collusion with postcolonial state managers hungry for foreign capital investments and jobs. Despite the valuable conversations and confrontation at UN-sponsored venues that try to reformulate these problems as those shared by the North, the two of us are not optimistic about the UN-mediated, NGO-driven form of transnational feminism. If we are truly to see change, we have to connect the conditions that, for example, create sweatshops in the North and South to those that create supermarkets in the United States overflowing with affordable fruits, vegetables, and meats in most neighborhoods, other than inner cities, or a lifestyle that defines cars, household appliances, and computers as essential rather than luxury items.

Expert Culture, Class Inequality, and the Activism/ Scholarship Split

Because transnational feminism defines itself as a political project that is simultaneously academic and activist, in this section we examine the ways in which academic and activist work come together in the U.S. academy. The fit is often uncomfortable, and we ask why. What

does this disjuncture say about our understandings of the processes that transnationalize labor and capital?

Here we examine two seemingly different modes of defining the relationship between activism and scholarship in the university to argue that both continue to reproduce class inequality. On the one hand, when the academy devalues its faculty's and students' activist work by refusing to give it the same status as intellectual work, it maintains the university as an elite institution and privileges it as the site of expert knowledge. On the other hand, when academics do build links with social justice initiatives and institutionalize them in the curriculum as service learning, the university still remains the source of expertise. This expert identity often prevents those doing justice work outside the academy from being recognized as experts as well. The dynamic that fosters an unequal relationship between activism and the academy resembles the relation of handouts between a resourceful North and a needy South that we outlined previously.

As transnational feminists we can be effective in dismantling the hierarchy between activism and scholarship and addressing its classed character. To do so, we need to bring into the academy the lessons we learn about organizing from our allies outside, thereby decentering and interrupting the authority of the university. The flow of ideas and tactics from the community into the university becomes crucial because, in the academy, we are up against many of the same manifestations of advanced capitalism that we contend with in doing our activism in "the community." In this way, a continuous ground for struggle opens up, connecting the two sites and the two forms of work that we usually experience and frame as disjointed.

Activism in the academy for some takes the form of intellectual labor. For others, in addition to teaching and writing about social change, it involves transformative politics, which requires action aimed at disrupting the status quo and restructuring institutions, including the academy. The subject position—scholar-activist—often reflects an uneasy relationship between universities and activist communities. Those of us who traverse the two sites experience severe tensions in reconciling academic demands with our activism.

Indeed, attempts in the academy to organize for social transformation are usually met with criticism that such work is nonacademic and seeks to reduce the university's intellectual mission to more or less vocational training. One of us is currently the principal investigator on a substantive grant from a major foundation. The grant is shared between a department and a college with the major portion going to the department. The foundation's intent was to support community engagement and action in the production of knowledge within the community such that the university could learn from the community what the latter perceives as its most critical goals and the most effective methods of engagement for useful outcomes. Although the department fully engages the community as intended, the college, which shares a portion of the grant, does not. The community is the object of study for the college's benefit, rather than being a coparticipant. Not surprisingly, though the college works *on* the community, it frames its work as "civic engagement" and as work *with* the community. Meanwhile, the department, with almost a four-decade history of working with(in) the community, has had that work for social

transformation and its validation by the grant minimized as nonintellectual by some in the college administration.

In the last decade or so, one conscious effort in the U.S. academy to institutionalize the links between the university and its surrounding communities has been through service learning. Faculty and students build partnerships with organizations, institutions, or agencies in the community to deliver scarce services and resources to correct an injustice or revive a neighborhood. University administrations are asked to shoulder their responsibility for the well-being of their neighborhoods and towns by picking up some of the costs of social change. The process is usually collaborative with communities identifying the urgent projects and desired outcomes.¹⁷

The prevailing models of service learning, however, keep existing class relations intact despite evidence of academics and students sharing resources to which the community previously had no access. Students and faculty administer surveys to establish the objective nature of a social problem, conduct focus groups, design needs assessments, write grants, and help community-based actors build “political capacity.”¹⁸ In short, academics discipline community activists to adopt highly bureaucratized practices to gain legitimacy, voice, effectiveness, and viability within a soft-money political economy.

Although we do not for a moment deny the pragmatic dimensions of grant-writing, funding, and skills-building, we want to point out that in this model of service learning, the modes of governmentality through which power in society is constituted and distributed go unchallenged, maintaining the status quo. Thus, in this model, academics do not share power. Instead, they end up reinforcing and universalizing the notion of an expert culture that makes universities elite institutions in the first place. By tutoring nonacademic actors and calling it activism, academics construct themselves as the ones with resources, repeating and reflecting the relationship of handouts that characterizes certain forms of transnational feminism that rely on networking, which we decry. Despite all the talk about university-community collaboration, students and faculty often miss the opportunity to learn from community activists how to organize for social transformation, not social reproduction.

The two of us, in our work within social justice movements in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, have come to realize that our engagement is a matter of necessity, not choice. The urgency with which we combine our activism with research and teaching stems from the ways in which the U.S. quest for global dominance structurally connects the struggles at the geopolitical sites mentioned and also the academy with the world outside of it. These connections require a transnational framework, such as that articulated by activists and workers we discussed previously. Thus, along with interconnecting the university and the community, we need to see the community as a transnationalized space. In organizing for social change, this will help us collapse the distance between the local and the global. Reconceptualizing community will help us realize that the “global” is not grandiose or distant but leaves its deep imprints on the urban neighborhoods, the “rez,” the farmlands, the military bases, the industrial parks, and the inner cities and suburbs that surround us.

At the Syracuse University conference, participants were asked to consider what it would mean to organize in the academy rather than continually debating the scholar/activist separation. The speaker rightly pointed out that the academy, after all, has figured deeply in the consolidation of empire and aids in the maintenance of state repression and oppression. As the U.S. state disproportionately mobilizes young, working-class, and poor men and women of color for war by promising them higher education that otherwise continues to be out of their reach, how do we propose to move from talk to action? In the post-9/11 era, we have watched how the onslaught of patriarchal patriotism is taking over the intellectual spaces in the U.S. academy. We know of academics who dissent, but we see that they are becoming increasingly marginalized through not so covert surveillance, and we see support for them retreating.¹⁹ How do we combat these developments?

In this regard, an activist from the women's organization Red Thread asked participants at the Syracuse University conference to take a moment to think very seriously about the poignant question: What is the point of reference for the work we do as academics? It cannot merely be tenure for ourselves. As the Red Thread activist rightly stated, academics must challenge the fundamental structure of society. Because the increasingly repressive forces have been transforming the academy into a so-called free market, we have to fight for the security of all workers in the academy—faculty, staff, and contract workers. We must counter the rise of the neoliberal economic frameworks that threaten our very existence in the academy, which increasingly operate like corporations favoring part-time labor. As transnational feminists we are uniquely positioned to act on these issues because our framework attends to capitalism, state formation, and nation-building. It allows us to track the interpenetration of the North and South and enables us to grasp the interdependency of these two spaces.

Conclusion

We have laid out here the effective forms of transnational feminism that we must necessarily engage to contribute systematically to a better life for the majority of the world's women located in the South and their counterparts in the North. The forces of capital, which have constructed these women as commodities to fuel the avaricious economies in the North, are the same forces that require our complicity to assist the U.S. nation-state in maintaining its geopolitical hegemony over the impoverished neocolonial states to sustain the oppression of our sisters. Building solidarity movements to aid in the liberatory action that women in the South have long been constructing and using against their oppression requires more than a familiarity with cross-border flows of capital and labor or our musings about the same. We must challenge these forces through the direct engagement of the state machinery, and when and where necessary, the academy: the site of knowledge production that simultaneously legitimizes and contests hegemonic U.S. state action.

This kind of work requires that we ourselves, as well as the institutions in which we work, put equal weight on organizing protest and theorizing our involvement in such activism. UN world conferences on women and UN policy language and debates have yielded little more than small doses of success for the world's poorest women. They have been far more successful in creating an industry of "studying poor women" that generates a somewhat steady source of funding for middle-class women globally in the name of feminism. This gravy train for middle-class feminists, including Southern transnational feminists based in the North, has reproduced class interests antithetical to the goals of working-class feminist action in the South in particular. We are proposing a different solution: that as feminists in the North we work in the communities in which we are located, making lateral linkages with women across those communities, crossing class boundaries to achieve a more realizable and relevant transnational praxis.

In order not to reproduce the severe limits of white, middle-class versions of U.S. feminism in transnational feminism that has self-consciously chosen another path, we must tackle the question of class-and nationality-based privilege not through crippling guilt but through addressing those structures of inequality that have differential yet connected impacts on those with whom we yearn to build solidarity, whether they are located in the North or the South. In that sense we are doing transnational work if we are organizing against the war in Afghanistan and Iraq; militating against the conversion of full-time teaching positions into part-time ones; challenging the suspension of minimum-wage protections and affirmative action in government contracts in rebuilding New Orleans; joining the picket line in support of low-wage and often immigrant service workers at our universities; teaching our students about their utter dependence on the labor of women whom they tend to see as poor souls needing to be rescued; testifying in public hearings against military bases as economic solutions; fighting the deportation of undocumented workers who provide cheap domestic labor to much of the upper-middle and ruling classes of this country, including many state managers; or documenting the effects of yet another plant closing in a blighted city while, at the same time, inviting workers to see the connections between their unemployment and the superexploitation of the Mexican, Chinese, or South Asian workers who were hired for their old jobs.

If we are part of transnational networks, then our travels to the South and our transnational conferring must be aimed at learning from those contexts so that we can organize against the particular manifestations of many of the same problems in places where we live and work. This point was made forcefully as far back as 1987 in a documentary, *Bringing It All Back Home*,²⁰ by a Sri Lankan labor activist who asked British workers struggling in a deindustrializing and deregulated enterprise zone-oriented economy to learn from the organizing efforts of women workers in Third World free trade zones. In these ways, we convert into practice the so-far discursive commitments of U.S.-based transnational feminism to relationality and the dismantling of binary oppositions such as North/South, center/margin, academy/community, and scholarship/activism. Transnational movements are not the inevitable effect of transnational capital. They are the

outcomes of the conscious work of activists who trace the ways in which transnational capital entangles the material lives of people in different national spaces.

Notes

- 1 Red Thread, a women's advocacy group in Guyana, has long fought for all women's rights regardless of race, class, religion, or political party affiliation. The group spearheaded the passage and introduction of the Domestic Violence Act in 1996 to stem the tide of violence against women. The act provided the legal framework to ensure that women's rights were upheld. GABRIELA, founded in the Philippines in 1984, organizes Filipinas across class and region to further women's rights in the context of militarization, economic deprivation—including landlessness—structural adjustment, and the movement to democratize the country's political structures. For information on the organization's projects visit http://members.tripod.com/~gabriela_p/home.html.
- 2 Teresa Carrillo, "Cross-Border Talk: Transnational Perspective on Labor, Race, and Sexuality," in *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat (New York and Cambridge, MA: New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press, 1998), 394.
- 3 See Margaret Jolly, "'Our Part of the World': Indigenous and Diasporic Differences and Feminist Anthropology in America and the Antipodes," *Communal/Plural* 7, no. 2 (1999): 195–212.
- 4 Ella Shohat, "Introduction," in *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminisms in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat (New York: MIT Press and New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 10–13.
- 5 Nandita Sharma, "White Nationalism, Illegality and Imperialism: Border Controls as Ideology," in *Gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics*, ed. Krista Hunt and Krista Rygiel (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishers, 2006), 125.
- 6 James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, "Spatialized States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality," *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 981–1002.
- 7 See Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminisms, Sovereignty, and Social Change," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 128–131, for an alternative concept of sovereignty.
- 8 Payal Banerjee, "Indian Information Technology (IT) Workers in the U.S.: The H-1B Visa, Flexible Production, and the Racialization of Labor," *Critical Sociology* 32, nos. 2–3 (2006): 427–447.
- 9 Vandana Shiva, *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (Boston: South End Press, 1997).
- 10 Piya Chatterjee, *A Time for Tea: Women, Labor and Post/Colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

- 11 Linda Carty, *Caribbean Domestic Workers in New York and Toronto: Transnational Capitalism Circulating Cheap Labor*, unpublished manuscript; Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
- 12 Sonia E. Alvarez et al., "Encountering Latin American and Caribbean Feminisms," *Signs* 28, no. 2 (2002): 537–579. Making a somewhat different critique, Inderpal Grewal has argued that global feminism is produced through the transnational circulations of women's rights as human rights discourses that operationalize modes of governmentality or technologies of knowledge through which women are converted into a population to be tracked, assessed, and regulated. See Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 121–155.
- 13 Carrillo, "Cross-Border Talk: Transnational Perspective on Labor, Race, and Sexuality," 394.
- 14 Manisha Desai, "Transnational Solidarity: Women's Agency, Structural Adjustment, and Globalization," in *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*, ed. Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai (New York: Routledge, 2002), 27.
- 15 Alvarez et al., "Encountering Latin American and Caribbean Feminisms"; Amrita Basu, "Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women's Movements," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 1, no. 1 (2000): 68–84; Annelise Riles, *The Network Inside Out* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
- 16 See S. Charusheela, "Structuralism and Individualism in Economic Analysis: The 'Con-tractionary Devaluation Debate,'" in *Development Economics* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
- 17 Adam Weinberg, "The University: An Agent of Social Change?" *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 2 (2002): 263–272.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 The attacks on Native American scholars, scholars of color, and scholars of Palestine have come under fire in the post-9/11 academy. In some cases their tenure has been revoked, and in others, the scholars have been dismissed or not granted tenure.
- 20 Chrissie Stansfield, *Bringing It All Back Home* (Sheffield Film Coop., distributed by Women Make Movies, 1987).

Reflection

- Most people see Hawai'i as an unproblematic "multicultural paradise." How do you define Hawai'i's "racial paradise"? What does Hawai'i mean to you?
- What would a decolonized Oceania look like?
- How do you engage in solidarity-building work? What are the limitations to forging ties of solidarity in intersectional oceanic spaces such as Hawai'i?

CONCLUSION

Beverly Tatum mentions in her work that, “The task of resisting our own oppression does not relieve us of the responsibility of acknowledging our complicity in the oppression of others.” It is important to reflect on these words as a reminder that the content from this book does not exist in a vacuum, especially as one looks to the many ways the continental US, Hawai‘i, and Oceania are intertwined by systems, structures, and relations of power. By focusing on these interconnected events, histories, and experiences from the margins, we provide you with a glimpse of how foundational ethnic studies can be in understanding the world. Through an oceanic framework, this text provides an analytically rigorous pedagogy which intends to help readers form a greater understanding of social, structural, and historical inequalities that continue to impact the experiences of marginalized communities. This understanding helps us connect race with indigeneity, gender with colonization, and community building with globalization, among other things.

However, there is more to be done. How do we build a better world? Oftentimes, at the end of a course, students approach us with a sense of hope and frustration for how to create a better future. After diving deeper into analyses of the margins, gaining a more detailed, and often overlooked, perspective on the overlapping histories, frameworks, and contexts that bind and uniquely shape the experiences of marginalized peoples, communities, and places, what is next? How does one place the social, historical, linguistic, cultural, and political intersections in conversation to address inequalities in the United States? How do we put this newly acquired knowledge, perspective, and these ideas into practice? How do we navigate through the various institutions of power, and privilege as they relate to our own positionalities? What implications do these ideas have for the US, Hawai‘i, and Oceania? How will Oceanic ethnic studies resonate with you and our collective futures?

It is our hope that with the help of the texts in this book, you can use this oceanic approach to ethnic studies to continue engaging critically to improve the world. We remain confident in your ability to rethink structures, relations, institutions, and systems of power while maintaining a commitment to social justice and community-based praxis. Though this may manifest in a variety of ways and spaces, whether in person with colleagues, online with strangers, or in intergenerational community spaces, we hope that your commitments to social justice and a peaceful, just, and equal society remain steady amidst the surging undulations of a changing world.